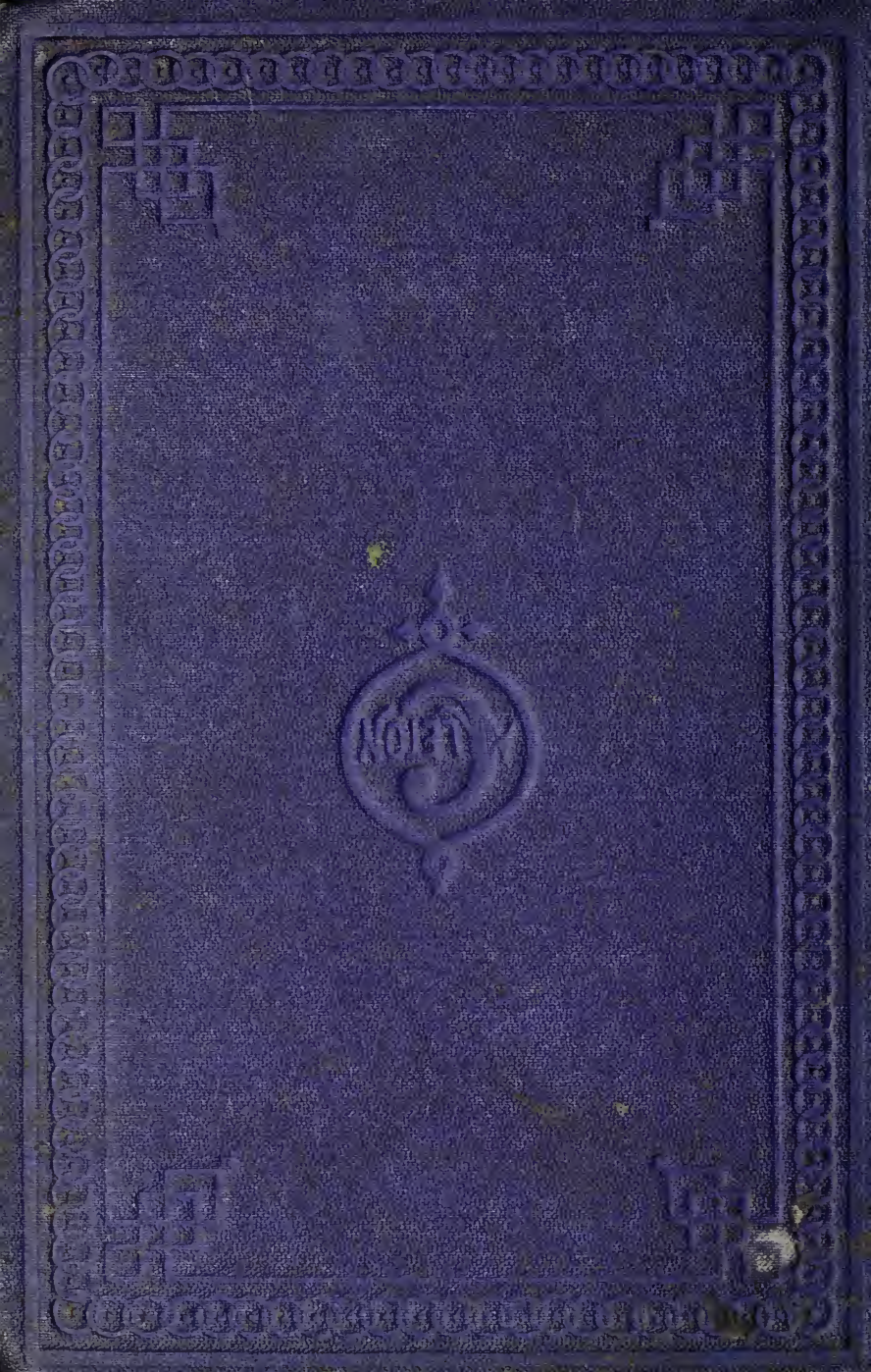

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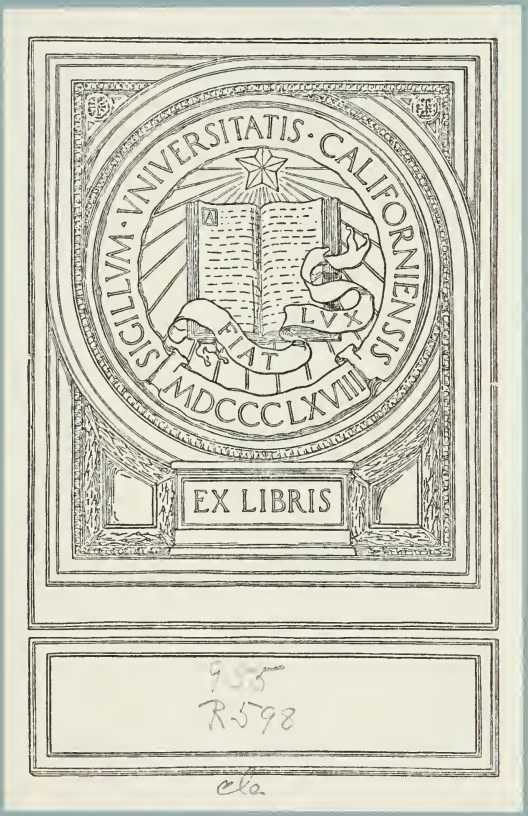

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AND OTHER SKETCHES.

A COLLECTION OF

PEN PORTRAITS AND PAINTINGS.

BY

ANNA CORA RITCHIE (MOWATT).

AUTHOR OF "FAIRY FINGERS," "THE MUTE SINGER," "THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ACTRESS," "MIMIC LIFE," "TWIN ROSES," "ARMAND," "FASHION," &c.

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THE CLERGYMAN'S WIFE.

IT was a fruitful subject for wonder, speculation, and gossip, when Amy Morton bestowed her hand upon Ethan Mildmay, the youthful pastor of an unpretending flock, in a remote New England village. Mr. Mildmay's salary was very small, and his worldly prospects gave no large promise. Moreover, his health was far from robust, for the nervous activity of his mind too often exhausted his physical strength, paled the glow of his unrounded cheek, shadowed his musing eyes by the drooping of weary lids, and left his form too slender for its exceeding height.

Amy had been delicately nurtured. In the home she left for Ethan's she had been surrounded by every desirable luxury. Her sunny sweetness of temperament made her the gladdening centre of a large social circle. She enjoyed, too, what people are apt indefinitely to call "the world." She took pleasure in travelling, she delighted in merry gatherings, she joined in the dance with spirit, she appreciated literature and art, a fine concert, a good play, a grand opera. The sanctimon-

ious pronounced her by no means good enough for a clergyman's helpmate, and the worldly declared her far too shining and attractive for the wife of a poor pastor.

No striking symmetrical regularity rendered Amy's face or figure remarkable. The latter may be described by the brief designation of "trim." The superlative charm of the former consisted in a pair of deep blue eyes, shaded by singularly black lashes. It was a countenance that involuntarily reminded you of Wordsworth's lines —

> —— "Gladsome spirits and benignant looks,
> That for a face not beautiful did more
> Than beauty for the fairest face could do."

But Amy's voice had a spell that far surpassed the power of exterior loveliness, for it gave an irresistible assurance of the most varying, most harmonious, most eloquent internal beauty. Those tones were literally spoken-music, and penetrated at once to the heart. When they were sorrowful, their pathos might have drawn tears from a listener who could not comprehend the words uttered, and when they were glad, the gushing, matinal song of the lark is not more purely joyous.

Yet Amy's vivacity was never boisterous. It was combined with a soft repose of manner, suggestive of reserved power that only waited development through life's coming demands for action.

Coleridge declares that "the perfection of a

woman's character is to be characterless." We think his somewhat startling assertion admits of interpretation. When all the attributes that compose a character are in such complete unison that they form a smooth and lovely whole, without the sharp prominence of any one trait, perfection is approached. This coherency, this harmony, this perfect balance characterized Amy's mental organization.

Amy had only one answer for those alarmed relatives and friends who came, with their worldly reasonings, to convince her of the folly of her choice. An answer full of maidenly, uncalculating simplicity. She loved him, she replied; he was the only man who had the power to inspire her with love; when he asked her for her heart, he only claimed that which was already his own.

Amy's attachment was not the capricious, evanescent, unaccountable emotion which is falsely dignified as "love;" not that mere physical, sensuous attraction which makes so many women cling to men they know not why. Amy loved the attributes of her lover's soul, the qualities of his mind and heart that make up the true man and shine through his exterior. She knew what she loved.

As to Ethan Midmay's ill health, which was urged as one objection to her union with him, it only awakened her tenderness; and the smiling patience with which bodily infirmities were borne

endeared him more and more, until through his very suffering he became sanctified in her eyes.

True, he was poor, but she had often heard him say that to every one of God's creatures as much or as little worldly wealth is allotted as can be of spiritual benefit. Much to those whom much would profit in some manner which the all-wise Giver alone comprehends, and little to those who would more rapidly gain spiritual riches through the scantiness of their worldly possessions. He had taught her that there were no such words as *accident* and *chance* with God, and that all things were ever working together for the good of those who love the Lord. How then could Ethan's poverty be regarded as an evil?

Let friends say what they might, Ethan and Amy felt that they were not unsuited. The happiness of marriage lies more in the fitness of one being for companionship with another, than in the actual qualities with which either one is endowed. The bond between Ethan and Amy sprang from this mental adaptedness, and caused a transfusion of mind which could not be otherwise than productive of felicity. One nature seemed the complement of the other; each was incomplete without that perfecting counterpart.

Mr. Mildmay's parsonage was a tiny cottage, so greenly veiled by a network of vines, so closely belted by overshadowing elms, that it looked like a bird's nest peeping out from its leafy canopy.

This picturesque abode was encircled by a small garden. The soil had been so carefully enriched and every inch of ground was under such high cultivation, that the narrow circuit yielded a wonderful profusion and succession of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. He who labored to implant good seed in human hearts, found his chief relaxation in the culture of this little spot of earth, and a never-failing enjoyment in pondering over and searching out the divine significance of its varied products.

To this sequestered home, far from the care and clamor of the guileful world, Mr. Mildmay carried his bride. Amy's domestic capabilities were now called into full play. Her knowledge of housekeeping was limited in the extreme, but she had sound sense, aptitude, ready hands, and a willing heart. She maintained that any woman of ordinary intellect, who has the will, can become an expert and thrifty housewife, and she soon exemplified the truth of her declaration.

Her orderly mind systematized and, by consequence, lightened all her labors. Household avocations were not drudgeries to her; she idealized them by the remembrance of the comfort they secured for him she loved.

She had the gift to evoke beauty out of the simplest combinations. As you crossed her threshold, the eye was charmed by the most tasteful disposition of furniture, light, color; by picturesque but

inexpensive adornments; and you were always greeted by the penetrating aroma of delicate flowers. The little parlor and her husband's study were invariably decked with them. She never spread the table for meals without placing upon it a tiny vase, freshly filled, or a basket of moss inlaid with expanding buds. Dishes of fruit were usually garnished with leaves and scented blossoms. Indeed, Amy had a strong propensity to imitate the fanciful culinary achievements of the fair Imogen, who cut into symbolical shapes the roots she cooked. At least so Ethan used laughingly to tell her when he tasted her preserves. Many a jest passed between the pair on the subject of her beautifying touches, for Mr. Mildmay was as cheerful as he was devout, and

"They sweetened every meal with social glee."

Amy was soon valued by her husband's parishioners. She mingled with them as constantly as her household duties permitted. The qualities of heart and intellect, the cultivation and genial grace that had made her the delight of her former social sphere, rendered her beloved in her new position. Her prompt sympathy, her quick appreciation, her cheerful looks, her winning manners, the penetrating melody of her voice, elicited spontaneous confidence and won involuntary affection. Every one, but Ethan, was surprised to see how quickly she became acquainted with the most

unapproachable of his flock, how confidingly they talked to her of their hopes and disappointments, their joys and sufferings, their struggles and shortcomings, and with what unwearied interest she listened, sympathized, consoled or advised, in tones of touching sweetness that made her simplest words impressive. Thus she effectually aided in her husband's labors for their welfare.

Mr. Mildmay was not a flowery pulpit declaimer of the sensation school, but there was a persuasive eloquence in the truths he clearly presented to the minds of his hearers which had a more permanently healthful, a more regenerating influence, than the most exciting sermon that ever stirred a congregation into enthusiasm for the servant of the Lord, without raising hearts to the Lord himself. The young pastor's mien, his very presence calmed, encouraged, and elevated. He taught, not by preceptive wisdom alone, but by the example of his life, by the broad charity, the love for others by which his Master had said his disciples should be known. Ethan Mildmay was a stranger to the morose bigotry that dwarfs the mental stature of so many pious men. The grandeur of his own spiritual breadth and height enabled him to reach the hearts of not a few whose expanded intellects rendered them inaccessible to a narrower grasp.

The religion with which he inspired his congregation was not made up of mere external observances and empty forms. He taught them that the

truths they heard must sink into their hearts and take form, and spring up, and come blossoming forth in the every-day acts of their lives. That regeneration is not the result of a moment's violent excitement, but a purifying work that, once commenced in the soul, must gradually, steadily progress through a whole existence. That the religion of a true servant of the Lord, a true member of his church, is made up of Charity as inseparable from genuine Faith as the heat of the sun's rays is from their light. A charity that rejoices in finding good in others, that seeks, (does not wait for, but zealously seeks) opportunities of serving others; a charity that influences every word man utters; every thought that flits through his mind; every purpose of his will; every movement of his life.

The piety he commended was not a lip-service, chiefly evinced by church-going and external sanctity, easily simulated and often hollow, void of all goodness; it was not the so-called "renunciation of the world," but a life full of good deeds in the midst of the world, the true renunciation in renouncing the evil things of this world.

Mr. Mildmay's congregation had rapidly increased since his marriage. It seemed as though his union with one so thoroughly congenial, so trustful yet so helpful, had rendered his manhood more complete, had imparted to him double strength, double influence, double power for good.

To his Sunday-school, in particular, Amy lent the

most active assistance. Little children she tenderly loved. To watch and foster the expanding germs that shoot daily in a young child's spirit, was to her an ineffable happiness. What wonder that her heart swelled, almost to rapture, when, in the first year of her wifehood, the precious promise of maternity was accorded her! How full of grateful, tearfully grateful, delight were her day dreams, as she sat plying her needle upon tiny caps, and dresses, and *sacques*, and picturing to herself the little wearer, towards whom her heart yearned with the most bounteous love!

She felt that the woman to whom the guardianship of a child's immortal soul is entrusted, shares the holy office that angels are ever discharging, the guiding of young feet along the paths that lead to heaven. In the words of the greatest, wisest of woman-poets, that

> "A child is given to sanctify
> A woman; set her in the sight of all
> The clear-eyed heavens, a chosen minister
> To do their business and lead spirits up
> The difficult, blue heights."

And now the hour to which Amy had looked forward with so much tender thankfulness, was at hand. That hour was one of more than ordinary danger. For two days her life was in imminent peril. Her protracted sufferings were borne with womanly heroism, a heroism not less wonderful because it is not rare. On the morning of the third

day a son was born to her. But when she listened for that first, faint wail, so full of music to the newly made mother's ear, there was silence, deep silence in the chamber!

She turned her large, blue eyes inquiringly, hopefully, towards those that surrounded her couch. There was no gleam of answering joy in the looks that met hers, every face was blank! With a stifled cry of anguish, she stretched her feeble hand towards her husband, and her white lips moved inarticulately.

He folded her tenderly in his arms, he held her close to his swelling heart in the silence of inward prayer. Then as the tremulous motion of the form that quivered in his embrace, slowly subsided, he whispered, "It is God's will, Amy; shall we oppose our wishes to His wisdom?"

It was an earthquake shock to Amy, the sudden vanishing away, the sliding from underneath her feet of a realm of hope, a world of happiness. But her husband's calm, instantaneous, undoubting recognition of his Master's will, infused fortitude into her stricken spirit. She uttered not one lamentation, not one murmur.

After a while, in a low, trembling tone, she begged that the babe might be placed in her arms. The little, lifeless form, arrayed in the white robe upon which she had expended so many hours of delightful labor, was laid upon a pillow by her side. With what eager eyes she scanned the

features of that cherub face! They seemed very perfect, very lovely in their marble stillness and whiteness. Again and again she kissed the cold lips that had never breathed, never moved to draw nourishment, and thrill with joy the heart on which that tiny head reposed. For hours she lay gazing on the motionless face, and holding the icy hands in hers, until she almost fancied they grew warm with returning life.

At length it was needful to remove the corpse. Then Amy's frame was convulsed with sobs, the fountain of her tears was opened, and they fell in heavy showers upon the withered bud which no such rain could revive. But would not this folded flower, despite its untimely earthly blight, expand in the gardens of the Lord? Was not the jewel this little, perishing casket contained, set in the crown of eternity? Parted, not lost; passing through death into life; wherefore should Amy mourn the babe that had only "gone before?"

Amy recovered her strength more rapidly than was anticipated. In a short time she was able to take her former place in the household, and resume her habitual avocations. Through the house and through the garden, her melodious voice was once more heard, chanting all day; and if the tones were sadder than of old, they were not less sweet. She seemed but little changed, though at times a cloud of dreamy pensiveness overshadowed her young face. But, in a few months, it was brightened

away, for again that holy promise, which she had welcomed with such ecstasy, was repeated. Now her joy was mingled with strange forebodings, and depressing fears, yet they only seemed to render her yearnings more intense.

When the hour came, her illness was even more severe, her sufferings were even more protracted; but, at length, her expectant, happy ears caught the longed-for sound, the cry of an infant's voice! Very feeble, very low, and yet as distinctly heard by her as the peal of rejoicing bells by a royal mother when a Prince is born!

Amy turned to her husband with an uncontrollable burst of emotion. What was the meaning of that look of anguish? She stretched out her eager arms for the infant. Wrapped in its little woollen blanket it was, at once, laid in her bosom.

Still no smile in her husband's half-averted eyes, no words of congratulation from his trembling lips. Oh! it was incomprehensible!

She heard the child's faint moans; she felt the clutch of the small fingers; the quick throbbing of the thread-like pulses; he lived! he breathed! he was hers!

The moans grow fainter and fainter, and then fade into a low, hardly audible murmur — the baby hand relaxes its hold — a strange pallor spreads over the tiny face — the lids drop heavily over the eyes! What is this? The limbs grow rigid — the

lips are white and still — the breath has ceased! Amy holds a stiffening, freezing corpse in her arms!

This trial was far severer than its precedent, for at the very moment when her highest hopes were embraced by reality, she was called to lay them down, once more, on the altar of Faith.

And that trial did not end here. The voice of one, whose medical skill and wisdom she could not doubt, pronounced that she could never again enfold within her arms a living child of her own — could never be a mother! That crown of glory she must not even wish to wear, or the rebellious yearning would dim the lustre of a more unfading crown prepared by angel hands for the head that bows with unquestioning, unmurmuring submission to the will divine.

What? Should the walls of her secluded home never echo the melody of a child's laugh? Should no little feet, gambolling among the flowers, fly to meet her at her coming? No tiny hand charm away her cares? No lisping tongue thrill her heart with the sound of the sacred word, "mother?" Should there be no infant soul in which she could plant heavenly seed that might yield a celestial harvest! No! no! no! Hard, hard indeed, was it to say "amen," and great was the anguish of her truly womanly nature, many were her inward struggles, her tears, her prayers.

She leaned more helplessly than ever before on

her high-hearted husband, and bade him teach her the lesson of resignation; bade him repeat to her, over and over again, that all which God orders is well. And, with his fond arm about her waist, her head resting on his shoulder, and his kindly voice dropping words of wisdom, like healing balm, upon her lacerated spirit, the teachings were not in vain. She found inexpressible comfort when he talked to her of the state of their two angel boys in their bright home. Upon that theme she dwelt untiringly, and soon her sorrow was hallowed to her. She accepted her fate, and it ceased to be terrible.

> "The darts of anguish fix not where the sea
> Of suffering has been thoroughly fortified
> By acquiescence in the will supreme,
> For time and for eternity!"

Her health was restored very slowly, and she never regained her former strength; yet she threw herself into active employment as the greatest safeguard against the melancholy which now and then would steal over her. Gradually the tranquil smiles returned to her lip. Her face had lost something of its joyous look, but had gained a holier expression that told of the chastening of grief, the bruise of the crushed flower that drew forth greater sweetness.

The young husband and wife were more united than ever. The link that childhood forges to bind

the hearts of married partners, grew out of their mutual bereavement. Every year they clung to each other with fonder, more helpful, more absorbing love.

The movement of Amy's life was very calm, but rounded by acts of steady, systematic goodness. Thus was born that heavenly peace which springs from the conscientious discharge of daily duties, even the most trivial, and thus was found the only true nepenthe!

Every day she asked herself "Has my existence bettered some other life to-day?" "Have I shared my gifts with others?" "Have I cheered any troubled heart?" "Have I made any burden lighter, any discordant spirits more harmonious?" And few were the days upon which Amy could not answer these soul-searching questions with thankfulness. When it was not in her power to do much, she was content to do little, if in that little she "did what she could!" True, she was never fully satisfied with the amount of good achieved, but what large nature ever is?

In spite of her heavy bereavement, and the much coveted blessing forever denied, the clergyman's wife was one of the happiest mortals that walked the earth. Could any being adopt Amy's rules of life and not be happy? Truly the Kingdom of God is "within us," and well has it been said, "God has two dwellings; one in heaven, the other in a meek and thankful heart."

THE BEAUTY OF AGE.

LL the poets who ever sang have chronicled the loveliness of childhood, of youth, of maturity; but the beauty of old age, not less alluring, not less impressive, and far more rare, has been the source of fewer inspirations. "Beauty in Age?" cries Youth, his bright, disparaging eyes flashing dissent. "Beauty, forsooth? The unequivocal respectability of Age, its wisdom sometimes, its claims upon our reverence occasionally, we admit, but infirmity and Decay are the handmaidens of Age, they were never yet the tirewomen of beauty!"

Listening to that scoff, an image rises before our mental vision, that rebukes Youth's hasty verdict. Age stands forth invested with triune beauty, physical, mental, spiritual! It is the picture of a Patriarch serenely counting the sands of his eightieth winter. A noble presence, with form erect as though Time had felt it fruitless labor and never essayed to bend its stateliness. About the high and meditative brow press silver locks, silken as childhood's tresses. The dark, genial eyes kindle

brightly with every emotion. The lines about the finely curved mouth tell it has been used to smile on iron circumstance, ay, these eighty years! Every furrow upon that countenance speaks of heroic battles with misfortune, ending in victories, of perfect faith crowned with the halo of peace, of the sympathetic nature that looks benignly upon all creation. The Patriarch's step has not lost its firmness, nor his voice its full, melodious tones, for his warm, fervent spirit has melted the frost of Age's winter before it could gather on his heart and paralyze his faculties. The movement of his life has ever been rapid, impulsive, energetic, persevering. His hands more diligently employed in succoring than acquiring, his every blessing shared, his worst enemy pardoned, — well has he earned the rare attributes that distinguish his age. Rich is he in years, aged in no other sense.

And yet he has suffered more, perhaps, than most men. He has known the sting of treachery, the sharp pinch of penury, the icy touch of ingratitude, the agony of bereavement! A single stroke of Fate has hurled him, in an instant, from the pinnacle of wealth and worldly dignity into the abyss of poverty, embarrassment, and what would have been despair to weaker men. Again and again he has been lifted up, he has achieved great successes, he has welcomed Heaven's good gifts in abundant showers, and again and again has he been cast down and stripped of all. Prosperity essayed

with the heat of her meridian sun, Adversity with his freezing winds, to rob him of the mantle of Faith in God's providence. Vain attempt! He only drew its folds more closely about him, and looking upwards, murmured, "It is well! it is well! Even as thou wilt, O Lord!" Herein lies the secret of youthful vigor, of unsubdued buoyancy, of the capacity for enjoyment, of the beauty in age preserved to an eightieth year.

Especially we love to recall his face as it looked upon a memorable celebration at which we were permitted to be present. Every heart beneath his hospitable roof beat gladly upon that day. There was a *fête* in honor of his seventy-eighth birthday. It would occupy too much space to describe the joyous festival; we will only touch upon the opening scene. The Patriarch sat beside a devoted wife, surrounded by a host of sons and daughters, grandsons and grand-daughters, who had flocked from their distant homes to gather about him. Many friends, too, were there, some whose dark locks had whitened side by side with his.

Within a bowery recess, decked with evergreens, and garlanded with festoons of natural flowers, behold a group of lovely children, clad in white, with flower-crowned brows and radiant faces. In the centre stands a classic-featured young maiden of but nine summers, holding by the hand a little sister of seven. These are the two youngest of the Patriarch's many daughters, the last roses of

his long summer. The knot of little ones that encircle them, down to the golden-haired, blue-eyed, three-year old boy and girl in the corner, who stand with their tiny arms clasped about each other, are his grandchildren. The dark-eyed child, the central star of this youthful galaxy, in a voice, distinct, liquid, and full of genuine pathos, utters the salutatory lines which some elder sister (given to the sin of rhyming,) has taught her. The verses have no value in themselves, yet happy tears roll slowly down the cheeks of the Patriarch, and fall from the gentle eyes of his wife, as they listen. And friends weep, not merely because the sight moves them, but because, oh! truly because they feel and are melted by the beauty of that Patriarch's old age. These were the words the little damsel uttered with such touching emphasis: —

Welcome this festive scene! —this glad array
  Of smiling faces gathered here!
These friends who join to celebrate the day
  We deem the happiest of the year!
The day so fraught with good — so bless'd of heaven
  And bless'd by thankful hearts on earth —
For seventy years and eight the brightest given,
  The day that saw our father's birth!

A stately tree he seems, that towers high,
  Its boughs with fruit all richly laden,
While spring-time blossoms, such as you and I,
    (*To her little sister,*)
  Its topmost branches crown and gladden!
Ah! many blasts — ah! many tempests loud,
  Have battled round his noble head,
And shook the limbs — (the trunk they never bowed —)
  And desolation round them spread!

With every storm the tree but higher sprang,
As nearer heaven it strove to rise,
While birds of hope amid its foliage sang
Their cheerful anthems to the skies.
Well pleased, the Lord of the great vineyard saw
That tree obedient to his will,
And bade his angels guard it evermore
From gales too rude, from every ill!

And when for many years its boughs have flung
Protecting shade, a refuge sweet,
O'er hundreds of the loved ones, old and young,
Who fondly gather round its feet;
While every heart with grateful love expands,
Thanksgivings from all voices rise,
He'll bid his angel host, with gentlest hands,
Transplant that tree to paradise!

Far distant be *that* hour! O'er *this* rejoice!
Devoted wife and children dear!
And friends and kindred, all, with blended voice,
Call blessings on his opening year!
Let sorrow, cares, be all forgot to-night,
In honor of this natal day;
With cloudless hearts and brows let all unite,
And homage to our father pay!

THE STEP-MOTHER.

TEP-MOTHER! Unmusically jars the word upon the ear! A sense of something harsh and chilling strikes against the heart at the sound. The vision of a place usurped, of children thrust from their father's knee, of old and pleasant ways put aside, and all things rendered strange and new in the familiar home, is conjured up by its utterance.

Let that not be! thou who hast borne a step-mother's title with such wondrous grace that it becomes ennobled in thy person. Give it melody, caught from the music of thy accordant life! Stand forth in the purple light of my thoughts, draped with the sweet and sacred memories which cling about thy lovely presence, that I may paint thee fitly. If the lines be but true, the tinting faithful, the portrait thine, it will wipe away the long reproach from the name of "step-dame," and embalm it in the fragrant aroma of gratitude and reverence and most tender love.

The waves of twenty years, or more, have melted

at thy feet upon the shores of time, since first with pleading eyes and timid mien, thou tookest the place a sainted mother left unfilled. Her children, not ungraciously — it may be with forbearing kindness — made room for thee beside the crowded hearth; but could they welcome, even the best of earth, to that dear seat which she of heaven had sanctified? No voice could call thee "mother;" the tender epithet seemed sacrilege upon her children's lips. The stranger was respected as their father's choice; for his sake valued, not beloved and honored for her own.

Was not thy gentle spirit sad and ill at ease, sitting among those half-averted faces, sons and daughters of one whose holy footprints thou hadst come to press out with thy faltering feet? They asked not, knew not; the hand of him whose wisdom none dared question, placed thee in their midst; the inevitable was accepted as the endurable.

How mild and meek thou wert, how doubtful of thyself, how all unconscious of thy own surpassing virtues! So unassuming that thou could'st not think the noblest act of thine was better than the common deeds of others. Ever blushing at thyself, the very wit, that flashed upon thy lips, because the bubbling fount within, could not repress its sparkling gush, was uttered in a tone that might escape the ear. Thus, shrinkingly, in thy new orbit didst thou move, thy life with unpretentious goodness rounded.

Soon, very soon, the holy magnetism that en-

sphered thy soul, was felt within that home. One face turned lovingly thy way, one heart expanded wide to let thee in, one little hand was placed confidingly in thine, one guileless head pillowed itself upon thy breast, and sought a mother's lost caresses there. Childhood's pure instinct, that has quicker knowledge of the good and true than older and more dull perceptions, found out maternal throbs in the "step-mother's" heart and proclaimed them with responsive tenderness. The youngest darling of the house, she who had been lifted up to sit upon a mother's death-bed, who had received upon her sinless brow the glorifying halo of a mother's dying smile; (oh! precious and mysterious benison that has illumined and enriched her life with manifold blessings from that hour to this!) 'Twas she, that little child, who knew and loved thee first! Quickly another and another face turned towards thee; another and another heart unclosed to let thee in; another and another hand grasped thine with warm and trusting clasp, and formed a sacred compact never to be broken.

What was the talisman that drew those alien hearts until they moved around thine own, harmonious as the stars about their sun? When sickness stretched some frail one, of that group, upon the couch of pain, thine was the cooling hand upon the throbbing brow; thine the voice that fell in soothing cadence on the ear; thine the patient ministering that brought relief and peace. When sorrow

bowed another to the earth, thou wert the first to stoop and lift the fallen head upon thy knees, and bind with skill the bleeding wounds, and kindle up thy smile of hope, until it melted and rolled back the mists from off the clouded spirit.

O rare combination of high attributes, that formed the setting of that puissant magnet-jewel worn within thy breast! A forbearing spirit, lenient eye, kindly judgment, quiet dignity, bending humility, life-pervading sweetness of Christian charity! Simple, womanly, unconscious, but unfailing magic!

Ere long there came an hour to test the strength of thy dear witchery, to break the spell, or make it stronger. A baby-daughter came to lift her wailing voice and plead for infant suffrages; to stretch her feeble arms, demanding her full share of the kind father's love; to look up, wondering, into all those faces gathered round her cradle-bed, and claim them as brothers and sisters. Then was the newly-made mother's triumph perfected; then was the bond, her gentle hands had woven, tried and cemented. The tiny being that was rocked by throbs of such tumultuous gladness, as it lay upon her breast, was welcomed as no half sister in her step-children's love, but taken wholly, gladly to their unsealed hearts.

And when another, and another, and another cherub girl was sent to swell the band of sisters, each little hand soon forged a new and shining link, in that long, golden chain, and made it dearer,

as it made its circle wider. And lips that could not frame the hallowed word, when thou didst cross that threshold, called thee "mother" now, and felt it was no wrong to her in heaven!

MAKE THE BEST OF IT; OR, FAIRY GIFTS.

THE chamber was large and luxurious; the first rays of morning stole through window curtains of rose-colored silk, and diffused an auroral hue over draperies of finely-wrought lace, that canopied the bed, where a youthful mother reposed in that pleasant state of dreamy consciousness when the mind hovers delightfully between waking and slumber. The flushed cheek of a sleeping boy was pressed to her own; a fair-featured girl nestled closely on the other side; in the richly decorated cradle, standing near the couch, slumbered a babe, a very pearl in its velvet casket. So, at least, the young Cornelia thought, for she often styled these three precious, human gems, worn with happy pride upon her maternal bosom, her diamond, her ruby, her pearl.

Few steps had she yet taken upon the journey of life, so few that the waves of time had not rolled far back into the past, the days when she gave credence to the existence of those diminutive "good people" called fairies, and now, in her semi-

somnolence, that half-forgotten faith washed the shores of memory again, and she murmured, dreamily: "Oh! if some fairy would bestow upon them each a wondrous gift!"

Scarcely had she spoken, when the rose-light, that tinted every object in the room, changed to a mellower dye; prismatic hues flashed fitfully through the golden radiance, gradually forming themselves into a rainbow of marvellous vividness; and, as the mother steadfastly gazed, beneath the resplendent arch, a form that seemed fashioned of moonlight, became visible. The ærial shape was clad in an amethyst robe, its unbound tresses rolled, like a mantle of molten amber, down to the shining feet; its luminous brow was crowned with a chaplet of lilies, each lily a living opal. Never had Cornelia beheld a countenance so touching, so indescribably lovely in its holy tenderness; as it bent over her, the violet iris emitted soft rays which penetrated into her breast, and warmed and gladdened her heart.

While she contemplated the celestial presence, in joyful amazement, a voice, like the sound of zephyrs sweeping over an Æolian harp, charmed her ear.

It said, "Your wish is granted, I am sent to accord one gift to each of these sweet slumberers."

Rapture rendered the mother speechless.

"Speak! What will you choose?" asked the unearthly visitant.

Then the mother's eyes, which had been riveted upon that beautiful apparition, turned to the boy, her eldest born, the diamond among her jewels; and, laying her hand fondly on his forehead, she smoothed back the tangled locks from his high, intellectual brow. Even at that light touch he started; his arms were tossed above his head, his attitude expressed disquiet, his color deepened, then paled again, his lips moved inaudibly; that he possessed a nervous, ardent temperament, it was easy to divine.

"Give him genius! Great genius!" she murmured fondly.

What delicious perfume stole through the chamber? It was the Fairy's soundless sigh.

"Ronald shall have genius!" she answered.

"What gift will you bestow upon your daughter?"

The mother gazed tenderly upon the little maiden, slumbering by her side, the ruby of her carcanet. Long, black lashes swept over the blooming cheek of the child, dark, clustering ringlets, waved in shining luxuriance about her snowy temples and throat, a half smile parted the exquisite mouth, the delicate outline of a symmetrical form was visible through the white raiment.

"She will be a woman; give her beauty, great beauty!" said the mother, enthusiastically.

"Cynthia shall have beauty!" replied the fairy, and this time her sigh was like the moan of a

gentle breeze, and again her breath loaded the air with fragrance, like the aroma of a crushed flower.

"And what gift will you bestow upon this pearl of purity?" she asked, gliding noiselessly towards the cradle.

Love unutterable beamed from the mother's eyes when they rested upon that snow-drop of infancy. As she hesitated and pondered, the fairy said, softly, "You have gifted the others, leave the choice of her gift to me."

"Oh, gladly!" replied the mother, "but let it not be inferior to theirs."

"My gift to little Viola," responded the fairy, "is the sweet faculty of making the best of everything through life? Of trials and sufferings, as of pleasures and triumphs, she shall make the best!"

The mother half started from her pillow with an exclamation of disappointment and remonstrance, but the golden light faded, the effulgent rainbow vanished, the unsubstantial form melted away; the roseate dye, reflected from the silken curtains, prevaded the room as before. Cornelia was half inclined to believe that she had slept, and the sudden movement had awakened her from a delicious dream.

Time passed. In a few years Roland began to be regarded as a prodigy. His talents excited general wonder and admiration. He drew and painted with surprising ease; his musical powers seemed a sort of instinct; he was a natural poet, too, and

verse flowed spontaneously from his lips or pen. Every emanation of his young mind bore the insignia of genius, and loud prognostics of future celebrity were constantly trumpeted in his ears. But his brain was taxed to the exhaustion of his vital powers, and his health grew feeble. He was morbidly sensitive, untranquil, unsatisfied. Fickly ruled by the feeling of the moment, impulse was his guide; inclination his law. When the task he had commenced with ardor began to weary, he threw it aside. He performed on several instruments, but chiefly by ear; instruction bored him; he could not rein down his high-soaring genius with the needful curbs of arbitrary rules. Now and then he made a feeble effort to acquire skill and correctness, but was quickly overcome by fatigue, and often left the instrument in disgust. The necessity for application always disheartened him. He commenced, with enthusiasm, sketches that gave great promise, but seldom finished even the best. The mood had passed away, he said, and he could not work when the spirit was not upon him. He could not force his will, nor conquer his indolence. So with his poems; he dashed them off rapidly, in a species of poetic furor, but the gem-like thoughts, scattered carelessly through these rude inspirations, needed polish to bring out their lustre, and he could not tone down, condense, elaborate; thus his fatal facility prevented his ever reaching high excellence.

Not less remarkable, nor less attractive, was Cynthia, through her extraordinary beauty; a beauty that shone forth not merely in her faultless lineaments, her superb dark eyes, the wealth of her abundant tresses, her statuesque form, but that seemed to permeate her whole being with an unportrayable witchery; a captivating, elf-like piquancy, heightened by her capricious variability of mood, by the restless grace, which resembled that of a humming bird, fluttering its gorgeous pinions before the dazzled vision. When she was pleased, what a laughing sprite she seemed! And who was able to resist her winsome wiles? But alas! she was very easily displeased, and frowns gave an impish character to her chiselled features, though, strange to say, without destroying their beauty. Yet one thing did seriously impair her charms, and that was her own evident consciousness of their power.

Her disposition, under ordinary circumstances, would have been good, and her abilities excellent, but perpetual flattery weakened her intellect, and rendered her temper captious. She experienced an insatiable craving for adulation, and was listless and dispirited, if, by chance, the unwholesome food were withheld.

If she encountered any difficulty in the pursuit of a desired object, she was quickly discouraged, and, without the faintest struggle to conquer the obstacle, weakly worried and wept over its exist-

ence. She could not endure disappointment in any shape. If a party of pleasure happened to be broken up by the rain, she conducted herself as though she were convinced the weather had been ordered expressly for her annoyance, and fretted all day at the unsuitableness of the atmospheric decree. If she chanced to be engaged upon a piece of sewing, embroidery, or knitting, that pleased her, and her thread got knotted, or she took a wrong stitch, or was forced to rip out, or she dropped her knitting needles, she grew vexed and pouted, and felt persecuted by some invisible agency, and was miserable for hours. Even at her toilette, when she was contemplating with only too much complacency, her fair visage in the mirror, if the glossy hair she was braiding, became tangled, or if she found an unlucky rent in some of her garments, or a disfiguring spot upon her dress, all her sunshine was gone; ill humor took possession of her; she was too much out of sorts to partake of the anticipated enjoyment, and unresistingly yielded herself up to the blue devils, who always seemed lying in wait to entrap her.

Little Viola was regarded, by casual observers, as a far more ordinary child than her brother or sister. She was intelligent, but by no means precocious. She acquired by industry and perseverance, not by intuition. In the place of striking beauty, she possessed, in an eminent degree, the loveliness of innocence and placid content, of glow-

ing health, and a gloriously developed *physique*, strong and untainted as her pure spirit. The more thoughtful gazer noted the softness of her deep blue eyes, the serene, yet earnest, expression of her mild countenance, the happy smile that ever lingered about her rosy mouth; and could not fail to remark that although she lacked the perfect grace of Cynthia's airy, undulating motions, all her movements were purposeful, as though some bright goal to be reached was ever within view. Her light, dancing step seemed the rebound of her leaping heart; her gushing laughter, the echo of her joyous soul; her melodious voice, the vibration of harmonious chords within. And though no one called little Viola "wonderfully gifted," as they did her brother, or "marvellously beautiful," as they did her sister, yet, little by little, all who knew her, received the impression that she was endowed with some nameless gift, that took the place of, or, rather, that surpassed talent, — some gift that conveyed a sense of superlative beauty.

Viola set about every undertaking with cheerful zeal, and pursued it with unwearied steadiness. When a difficulty arose, she paused good humoredly, carefully examined into the nature of the obstacle, threw all her might into the effort to overcome it, and, if no remedy could be found, half warbling her cheerful by-phrase, "make the best of it!" she sought out a way by which the evil might be endured. When she was deprived of an anticipa-

ted pleasure, she philosophically endeavored to substitute another, within her reach. A book, some pleasant employment, arranging pressed flowers in her herbarium, adding to her scrap-book, learning a song, sketching a new picture, invariably neutralized the spirit-dampening effects of the unwelcome rain. In short, she accommodated herself to circumstances with such skilful adaptation, made the best of the inevitable with such cheerful tact, that no passing event inconvenienced her, no chance disappointment disturbed her equanimity.

As she grew older, she astonished her parents by correctly executing difficult pieces of music, which had baffled her gifted brother's skill; and completing pictures he had commenced and thrown by in despair. She inherited, too, his faculty for versification, and though her effusions were always short, the music of the rythm, the concentration of thought, the choiceness of the language, and high finish of her verses, placed them far above his more ambitious, but less perfect, poetic flights. By and by, her parents were startled into the admission that Viola's talents were equal, if not superior, to those of her brother; and when her sunny, peaceful face was accidentally placed in contrast with Cynthia's fretful, clouded countenance, in spite of the rich coloring and classic symmetry of the latter, Viola's was pronounced the more beautiful.

"Ah!" exclaimed the mother, remorsefully,

when this conviction pressed upon her, "ah! the Fairy was wiser than I! She has given my Viola all gifts in one. 'She shall make the best of everything!' the good spirit said; and, blind that I was, I could not see that to make the best of everything was to have no faculty undeveloped, no power wasted; to let no opportunity be lost, to be conquered by no trial, to pursue the right path steadfastly and unweariedly, to find out the use of the very roughness of the road! That blessed endowment surpasses the boon of genius and beauty, yet gives birth to both! Assuredly, no one can know how abundant are God's blessings, (come they in what shape they may,) until he has made the best of every one!"

THE SCULPTOR'S TRIUMPH.

IN the palmiest days of art in Florence, one of its grand Dukes made known, by proclamation, that he designed to add to the statues which adorned his palace, a representation of Mary, the pardoned sinner, anointing the Saviour's feet, which she had washed with her penitent tears, and wiped with her flowing hair. The space of three years was allowed for the creation of a *chef-d'œuvre.* Three venerable sculptors were appointed judges. At the expiration of the allotted time, they were commissioned to visit the *atelier* of every artist, who notified them that he had a Mary to offer, and decide what statues were worthy of being sent to the ducal palace for further examination. There the final selection was to be made, by thirty-four judges. The sculptor whose chisel produced a marble Mary of superlative beauty was to receive the sum of £500 for his labor. But mere gold mattered little, compared to the honor of a triumph which opened a brilliant career to the successful aspirant.

Need we number the artists who were competitors for the invaluable distinction?

The day previous to the one fixed for the exhibition arrived, the day upon which the three judges made their rounds, and awarded permission for the statues approved to enter the palace on the morrow.

Many a heart in Florence grew sick with alternations of hope and fear. Many an artist's soul was filled with despair as he recognized the vast distance that existed between his actual execution and the sublime heights reached by his ideal conception. Many others, gifted with the gigantic self-esteem which is often the blemish of genius, exulted in the certainty of their triumph, and, unrebuked by a doubt of their surpassing merits, impatiently awaited the coming of the judges.

In one studio sat a youth who had seen the roses of but twenty-two summers bloom and wither. Though the dawn had scarcely broken, he was dressed with scrupulous care, and his picturesque attire, of black velvet, displayed to advantage his lithely moulded form, and imparted a striking transparency to his colorless complexion. His hollow cheeks bespoke vigils of study and labor; his dark, deeply sunken eyes, full of restless fire, betrayed a fervid and highly sensitive organization, a temperament at once imaginative and volcanic. His hair of purple blackness, wandered in untaught curls from beneath a velvet cap, shading his expansive brow, and eloquent, though too sharply cut, features.

His studio was somewhat bare. A crimson curtain divided the apartment. As the golden rays of morning began to illumine the chamber, Andrea was roused from his reverie. He rose and bolted the door, a precaution always taken before that curtain was thrown aside. Now, with eager movements, he flung back the crimson folds and again sank into his seat. As he contemplated the treasure disclosed, what rapidly varying expressions chased each other over his countenance, like a changing panorama fitfully reflected in some pellucid mirror.

Before him stood a marble wonder, indeed! The plaster model was partially visible in the background. In general, sculptors do not themselves handle the chisel, except to give a few finishing and embellishing touches. The laborious mechanical duty of copying in marble, by close measurement from the plaster cast, is usually entrusted to skilful workmen; but Andrea felt as though his exquisite creation would have been profaned if other eyes rested upon it, other hands touched it during its incompletion. He had called his Mary into existence out of the snowy block himself. Truth to say, he had manipulated as lightly and tenderly as though he feared the frigid stone were gifted with sensation; as though he thought, each moment, that it would pulsate with life. Pygmalion looked not more enamored of the loveliness that had started into shape beneath his touch than

the young, unnoted Florentine sculptor in the presence of the Mary he had evoked!

It was a gloriously beautiful form, full of the most exquisite delicacy, the most speaking grace, the most touching purity. The kneeling figure, though ethereally fragile, was rounded to such perfection that laughing dimples were pressed upon the falling shoulders, the Andalusian feet, the dainty hands. The swell of the expanding bosom, just budding into the fulness of womanhood, was revealed beneath the transparent drapery. The small, poetically shaped head was raised, disclosing the graceful curve of the slender throat; the upturned face seemed gazing with inspired devotion, into that of the Saviour. The hair flowed to the ground in rippling waves. One hand held the box of ointment; the other clasped the clustering tresses, as though in the act of pressing them upon the Redeemer's feet.

But there was a marked defect in the marble representation, though Andrea saw it not. That face and form inspired the gazer with a sense of the spiritualizing power of perfect chastity. Its loveliness was that of the most unsullied innocence. No trace of sensuous emotion was visible. It was not possible to imagine that one whose soul had been heavy with sin, could ever again wear a look so pure.

While Andrea sat dreaming before his masterpiece, a light tap on the door was thrice repeated,

as though for a signal. Andrea started up, and his pale countenance flushed with a sudden glow of rapture. Is it the judges he is expecting, so soon after the sunrise? The bolt is rapidly withdrawn, the door opens, a young girl, followed by a sort of nurse, or *gouvernante*, enters.

"Constanza, you have come!"

"Did I ever fail you, Andrea?"

"Never, my good angel, my saint of Inspiration? Come, and let me see if I can dare to look once more upon the copy, and behold it fade into dull, impotent insignificance before the divine original!"

Andrea's Mary was not the offspring of his imagination; there, before him, beamed that guileless countenance, stood that shape full of artless grace and infantile purity, which he had so faithfully transmitted to marble. But the "lunar beauty of sculpture" could not convey the lustre of those clear, blue eyes, the amber gleaming of the hair, the peach-like hue of the cheeks, the dewy rosiness of the tender lips, the auroral freshness of the whole form.

Something more than two years previous to the date of our narrative, the maiden's father chanced to see a statuette of St. Catharine modelled by Andrea, and was struck by the genius evinced by its execution. The Duke was not only an experienced judge but a liberal patron of art. He at once purchased the St. Catharine, sought out the

young sculptor, and engaged him to adorn a hall of his palace with bas relievos.

A room was appropriated to Andrea's use, for the prosecution of his work. The Duke and his daughter watched its progress with deep interest. Indeed, Constanza, when her studies were accomplished, daily wandered to the apartment where the young sculptor was employed. That one as sensitive to physical beauty as Andrea, finding it united to rare mental loveliness, should have become enamored of this paragon of maidenhood, was almost a matter of course. But Andrea worshipped in respectful silence, and never had the audacity to suppose that his passion had revealed itself in his looks ; never dared to hope that she who inspired it could become conscious of its existence ; never was mad enough to dream for a moment that, if divined, it could ever be returned.

The bas relievos completed, the sculptor withdrew, full of gratitude to his noble patron, and bearing with him the image of Constanza, indelibly stamped on his own soul! She was the far-off star that henceforth illumined his horizon, though deemed as unapproachable by him, as constellations are to mortals.

What was his astonishment when Constanza, with her faithful attendant, Bettina, who had watched over the motherless young maiden from her infancy, made their appearance at his atelier! They came again and again ; and Constanza, un-

conscious as Desdemona of the betrayal of her affection, like Desdemona, was "half the wooer." Andrea's discretion was put to flight; in an unguarded moment he poured forth his hopeless passion, asking and expecting nothing but the privilege of saying that he loved and despaired, the joy of daring to believe that his love was not spurned. To aspire to the hand of a Florentine lady of high lineage, seemed too wild a vision even for an enthusiast. But the gentle Constanza thought otherwise.

"You will be famous one of these days," she timidly said; "you will win renown equal to that of Michael Angelo, and then my father will not refuse you his child. Genius has a nobility of its own, far higher and worthier than that of accidental descent. We have only to wait — wait for years, perhaps many years! Wait until clustering laurels have crowned your brow, and then you may place the bridal chaplet upon mine."

So she prattled on in her hopeful, innocent way, and Andrea, against his better judgment, could not forego the happiness of believing her words.

When the prize for Mary was offered by the Grand Duke, Andrea immediately became one of the competitors. Was it wonderful that he unconsciously communicated to his design the face and form ever present to his mind? Old Bettina first discovered the resemblance. Then Constanza impulsively proposed to sit as the model for her

lover. How could he refuse? Day after day, before the house was astir, she and Bettina stole forth, under the pretence of taking a morning walk, and hastened to Andrea's studio. All the young artist's faculties were quickened by love and ambition. All his powers, in the fulness of their strength, were concentrated on this one work, the *chef-d'œuvre* which was to earn him fame and win the bright original he was duplicating.

"Are you content with your Mary, yet?" asked Constanza, looking into his dark eyes and discovering the cloud that shadowed them.

"I am never content with her when you are by! It is in vain that I have tried to give this hair the soft ripple of yours! And, oh! that I could impart to the blank marble the living hues, the changing gold of the locks, the celestial blue of the eyes, the rose-tint of the lips! The statue looks so cold and senseless when you are before me, that I am in despair!"

"Oh! Andrea, I am sure that it is perfect! But since you are dissatisfied with your work, I must sit for you once more. It will be the last time, for the judges visit the studio to-day, and to-morrow the statue will be admitted into the palace."

Before Andrea could reply, Constanza had hurried with Bettina into the ante-chamber. In a few moments she re-appeared, looking more angelic than ever, in the spotless white robe, girdled lightly

around her flexible waist, and flowing into folds that clung to her slight form and revealed its undulating outlines. Her long hair enveloped her like a golden cloud. With unstudied ease, she at once threw herself into the attitude of the penitent Mary, and remained motionless. Andrea contemplated her in almost breathless silence, then took up his chisel and gave a few light touches to the marble, then drew back, and gazed upon the living form, glowing with life and beauty, and upon its inanimate copy. Carried away by an ungovernable emotion, he suddenly flung aside the chisel, and burst into tears.

Constanza sprang up and hastened to his side, but his agitation was so violent that he seemed unconscious of her presence. With gentle force she drew away the hands that covered his face, and gathered up her flowing tresses as though to wipe his eyes. Well might the mingled archness and poetry of the action make him smile.

"Your Mary will win the prize, Andrea! I am sure of it!"

"Will it win both prizes, this above all?" answered Andrea, taking her hand.

"Yes, one now, and the other in time. Perhaps," she added, laughing, "when there are a few wrinkles here for you to add to your Mary's brow, that the likeness may be retained. But see how the sun is marching up the heavens! Come, Bettina, it warns us to be on our way."

The attendant and her beloved young mistress retired again and quickly returned, Constanza wearing her usual dress.

"Farewell, Andrea; to-morrow morning I will come again to learn what the judges have said. To learn?" she continued, gayly, "why I can prophesy their words, I shall have nothing to learn, only a sweet confirmation to hear. Do not shake your head, I am sure of their verdict; farewell."

The leave-taking between the young lovers was hardly as warm as might have been expected. They clasped hands, she with trustful, yet tremulous timidity, he with tender reverence. Such had ever been the reserved character of their intercourse.

As the door closed the young sculptor turned again to his Mary. A thousand glaring defects became suddenly apparent to his excited imagination; all the features were distorted, the lines were faulty, the whole expression was tame, senseless! He could not endure the sight of his work, and impetuously drew the crimson curtain, vowing that he would not throw back its folds until the judges arrived.

There was no likelihood of their appearance before noon, yet he did not dare to absent himself from the studio, even to break his fast. He sat with his head leaning on his hands, lost in thought; and, while he mused, the gates of fancy opened

to every fantastic fear that presented itself for admission.

Hour after hour passed, and now he began to start at every step that approached his door; his heart palpitated and his breath came thick, but the steps passed carelessly on, as though no one were conscious of his existence. The gairish light began to soften and fade; surely it must be evening! Andrea shuddered at the terrible possibility that he had been wholly forgotten.

A loud rap on the door put to flight this last tormenting fiend. The judges had come. As they entered Andrea thought they glanced around with an expression of undisguised scorn.

He faltered out, "You are very welcome, it was so late, I almost feared"—

One of the judges interrupted him, and answered, gruffly, "Yes, we are late, we have made the rounds of the studios, and a fatiguing time we have had of it; this is the last, we must get through quickly while the light serves."

His tone expressed not merely impatience, but the conviction that they could meet with no artistic achievement in that locality which would require much examination, or give rise to any prolonged discussion.

Andrea seized the crimson curtain with a convulsive grasp, threw it aside, and turned away, that he might not see the condemning countenances of his merciless critics. Large drops of

dew started from his brow; a cold tremor ran through his frame; his heart sank as with the pressure of a leaden weight. The door which opened to admit those stern-visaged old men had let out his last hope. His only struggle now was to bear the sentence of condemnation like a man; his only wish that the interview might be quickly over.

For a few moments deep silence followed the disclosure of the statue. The stillness was broken by an exclamation from the eldest of the visitors. Andrea turned involuntarily. The features of the old man evinced violent emotion, as with piercing, uncompromising eyes, he intently surveyed the marble form. It was not admiration his countenance expressed, nor disappointment, nor disapproval, it was absolute horror.

In the looks of the other two judges the most casual observer could have read wonder and delight. They whispered together for a moment, then turned to Andrea.

"It is a noble work, full of power, full of genius!" exclaimed one of these two, with enthusiasm.

"I was never more amazed! I expected nothing like this!" ejauclated the other.

"It will be admitted to the exhibition, then?" asked Andrea, eagerly.

"Admitted?" replied the judge who had first spoken. "Young man, it will win the prize. Is not that your opinion?" turning to his companion.

"Decidedly the best thing we have seen yet. It will be the chosen master-piece. Do you not say so?" said the latter, addressing the eldest of the party, who still stood silently glancing from the statue to Andrea with a troubled gaze.

"If it should be seen at the exhibition, yes — but" —

"*If*, Signor?" interrupted Andrea; "I intend to send it there; that is, if your permission will be granted."

"That is yours," said one of the old men, who had seated himself by the table, and was now writing. He held out the order of admission. "Send the statue betimes to-morrow; the doors will be open by ten."

Andrea extended his trembling hand for the paper, his lips moved inarticulately; the quick revulsion from despair to ecstasy had rendered him speechless. He was intoxicated with happiness, yet its suddenness caused him to suffer intensely. At that moment he felt that he knew what the sense of dying with joy must be.

Two of the judges passed out of the studio. The eldest lingered a moment behind, and whispered to Andrea, in a voice of command; "Remain here for a short time; I will return; I have something of importance to say to you."

Andrea bowed, smilingly.

The door closed, and he threw himself upon his knees and gave vent to his gratitude and rapture

in a vehement burst of thanksgiving. Then he approached the sculptured figure and addressed it passionately, as though it were a living thing, as though it were Constanza herself!

A step behind him interrupted his rhapsody. The judge had returned. His face was very grave.

"Young man," he asked, abruptly, "who posed for that statue?"

Andrea started, but did not reply.

"Who was your model?" inquired the judge in a still harsher tone.

Andrea hesitated, then stammered out with undisguised confusion, "Is it always needful to have a model? An ideal work, methinks, might" —

"Do not trifle with me!" rejoined his questioner, in an authoritative tone. "This is no ideal work. You had a model, and that model was Constanza, only daughter of the Duke ——. Confess it."

Andrea's look of consternation was an unmistakable answer.

"It is well that you do not attempt to deny the fact. The likeness is so striking that it would be impossible for it not to be recognized at a glance. If this statue should appear at the exhibition, all who have ever beheld Constanza, will recognize it as her faithful counterpart. Have you thought of the consequences of such a revelation? It will be known that she came here in secret; that she sat as your model; that love for you could alone have

moved her to this imprudent act of devotion. Her spotless name will receive an indelible stain. Her proud father, overwhelmed by the public disgrace of his child, will visit his wrath upon her in some fearful manner; possibly by banishing her to a convent! You will win the prize, and the road to fame and fortune will be thrown open to you. I do not attempt to conceal from you that such will be the result of your exhibiting that statue; but the rash girl, through whose devotion you achieved your triumph, will be covered with obloquy!"

A thunderbolt had fallen upon Andrea. Hardly less white than the marble shape before him, and as powerless, he listened to these words of doom.

"I come to warn you," resumed the judge. "And now that you have heard that warning, I would test which is stronger in a young man's breast, the desire for fame, or love for a pure woman; ay, love, for it is evident that you are enamored of Constanza. I read that in every line of your work."

Still Andrea gave no sign.

"I shall know your answer to-morrow, by the absence or presence of that statue at the exhibition. Reflect upon my words. I know Constanza's father well. I leave you to make your choice."

He bowed slightly, and passed from the room.

Andrea remained standing, mutely gazing upon the door that closed on the pitiless oracle. Slowly the sculptor turned once more to the marble Mary.

His agony could not be compressed into speech, or even find vent in groans; he was stunned, petrified! His brain was on fire! A thousand frightful phantoms passed before his dazzled eyes! The statue lived, and talked to him; upbraided him, mocked him, cursed him for its creation! Myriads of tongues shouted "Shame!" "Shame!" "Shame!" in his ears.

That night was one of unbroken horror. The morning sun found him in a state of semi-stupefaction, which had succeeded his excess of phrenzy. Hardly had the amethyst light of dawn touched the statue, when three soft taps sounded on the door; but he stirred not. They were repeated again and again, but he did not hear. The door, which had not been fastened after the Judge passed out, gently opened. Constanza's airy step gave no sound, but Bettina's heavy tread aroused Andrea. The young maiden uttered a cry as she glanced at his haggard face, drawn into sharp lines; his wildly glaring eyes, his dishevelled hair, and look of hopeless wretchedness.

"Oh! Andrea, has your master-piece been refused?"

With almost maniacal vehemence, Andrea related what had occurred.

"Your disgrace, Constanza!" he added, wildly; "that shall never be! I have vowed that it should not! Love conquers ambition, and the hope of glory! Love is stronger than all else! See! see! thus I put an end to temptation!"

He seized a heavy mallet, and, with a few blows, the plaster model was shattered! Constanza tried to stay his arm; even Bettina interposed, and prayed him to desist; he heeded neither. For a moment he stood before the exquisite marble form, over which he had toiled, and hoped, and rejoiced, years. With a heart-bursting cry, and the look of an executioner, he lifted his arm; it descended, and the lovely head rolled on the ground! The work of destruction went rapidly on; the hand that held the box of ointment was smitten, the white arm fell, the glorious shape was mutilated; still the blows were repeated with frantic force.

Neither Andrea, nor the young girl, nor her attendant, had heard the door open. It was not until a shriek of terror escaped from Bettina, that they beheld two old men standing upon the threshold, mute spectators of the scene.

One was the Judge who had warned Andrea, the other was the father of Constanza!

The former, fearing to trust to the sculptor's decision, had informed his noble friend of the discovery he had made, and hastened with him to Andrea's studio, at an hour too early for the statue to have been sent to the palace.

The Duke's just indignation melted at the sight of that heroic deed of self-renunciation. He recognized and respected the nobility of spirit that nerved the young sculptor's heart and arm; the man he would have spurned, an hour before, was

transformed by that noble act into a hero; was raised to an equal.

He strode past the trembling Constanza, and laid his hand on Andrea's arm, just as it was lifted for another blow.

"Enough! I would contemplate what is left of this wonderful work, which my friend so highly commends."

Andrea's excitement suddenly subsided; his knees knocked together; a livid hue overspread his countenance, the lids dropped over his glazing eyes, he tottered, and would have fallen, if the pitying Judge had not received him in his arms, and tenderly placed him in a chair.

"Pardon Constanza! visit no wrath upon her," Andrea murmured, faintly.

"She is pardoned," answered the Duke, extending his arms to receive her. The weeping girl gratefully clung to his bosom, but with her eyes fixed imploringly upon her half insensible lover.

"Andrea!" said the Duke, "you have achieved a greater triumph than if your statue had obtained the prize; and you have won a friend whose trust in you, the experience of this hour proves that you will never betray."

* * * * * *

The Duke had not misjudged the character of the gifted sculptor. Not even his profound passion for Constanza, ever tempted him to return her father's generous confidence with treachery.

Though he and Constanza often met, it was never again in secret, and Andrea breathed no word of love into the maiden's ear. Time tested, and forbearance strengthened, their affection. Andrea's powers as a sculptor kept steady pace with his ambition. In a few years he won renown, and, with it, a richer guerdon, for the Duke bestowed upon him the hand of his daughter. But this dearest triumph was wrought, not by the fame which crowned his genius, but by the glorious victory he had gained over himself.

THE COQUETTE.

HE admired of many eyes and the beloved of numberless hearts, (male ones, be it understood, for women are strangely chary in bestowing affection upon her,) is Amanda Littleton. See how regally she stands, begirt by her worshipping subjects! How the ball-room moths, that float around her, sun themselves in the light of her liberally dispensed smiles!

> "Bright as the sun her eyes the gazer strike,
> But, like the sun, they *shine on all alike*."

As a juggler plays with his glittering balls, she is skilfully sporting with all those hearts, keeping them flying around her, yet attracted to her, powerless to break the charmed circle. But the artillery, with which she conquers, is so light that it seems cowardice to fly its graceful battery. The arts by which she ensnares, are so subtle that the wisest of her train can neither analyze nor withstand them. The favors she tosses as rewards, to this or that suppliant, are so harmless, so equally distributed, that none dare chide her prodigality.

'Tis but a languishing look she bestows on that adorer, a triumphant smile on this; that tender sigh is for another; something very like a blush is the guerdon of a fourth who is pouring soft flatteries into her ear. But even while she listens to his praises, her eyes are wandering afar, she arches her slender throat and glances over her snowy shoulder; the loadstone of that look attracts another admirer to her side; and the glance is repeated, again and again, with victorious result. An indefinable instinct, the fifth sense which belongs to coquetry, invariably warns her whenever a possible captive comes within reach of her enthralment.

What wondrous power lies concealed within the witching depths of those eyes of hers! We have watched their play, while her dewy lips mutely kissed each other, and the most impassioned words would have been less eloquent than the unspoken language telegraphed from those human windows. Now they are uplifted with saint-like expression, now musingly half-closed, now the clear orbs dance and flash, now gaze dreamily through liquid lustre; suddenly the sweeping lashes drop in confusion over the blooming cheek, then are rapidly raised in glad surprise. No need of utterance to convey her real or simulated emotions, with such eyes to say more than lips could fitly syllable.

But do not imagine that she is always thus silent; far from it; and her voice imparts a charm to the

veriest *persiflage* by the rare faculty of attuning itself to the mood of the hearer. At one moment her tones are full of melting sweetness, at another, ringing with mirth; again gravely subdued, or breaking forth into a gush of silvery, but never loud, laughter; and now and then as she speaks, her aromatic breath touches the cheek that bows towards her and sets the listener's pulses throbbing in rapturous tumult.

The very rustling of her dress, as it sweeps along, has an alarum sound, that cries, "follow!" and truly a motley procession follows at the signal. The modern Alcisthenes walks arm in arm with the high priest of science; the laureled hero and head with cap and bells loom out, side by side, the Solon of the bench hobbles to keep pace with the springy step of the brainless exquisite.

Have we conveyed the impression that Amanda owes her fascination to the "fatal gift" of superlative beauty? That is an error. Strictly handsome she can scarcely be called; but she is so piquantly, picturesquely irresistible in face, and form, and mien, and ways, that the faultless beauty, who aspires to be a rival in her absence, flies the field, the instant that Amanda appears. Her supremacy lies in a kind of bewildering witchery, which makes itself felt in the very opening and shutting of her fan, the motion of her delicate hand, the transient peeping of her small foot from beneath her ample drapery, the heaving of her alabaster breast, ay,

in the very rebellion of that tiny curl which invariably breaks the bondage of those glossy braids. Too suggestive of liberty is that recreant "love-lock," which jewelled fingers are constantly thrusting back, or which a toss of the Phidian head sets quivering along with the red rose imprisoned in her soft tresses, and the long spray, tipped with an opening bud, that roams caressingly down her white shoulders.

But there is no disorder about her toilet, save that which is apparent in the straying of the escaped ringlet, which brings to mind Pope's declaration that "man's imperial race" are ensnared by fair tresses, that beauty draws by "a single hair," and recalls what some other bard has sung about lovers "being tangled in the meshes of Phillis' locks."

Did we venture to use the word "disorder" in relation to Amanda's toilet? That expression was singularly inappropriate, for she is attired with such exquisitely elaborate care, that one might imagine there was no leisure in her day for any other employment than the arraying of her fair person; not time even for thanks to Him who fashioned the loveliness she delights to deck; or else we might fancy that she had revived the custom of those courtly belles in days of yore, whose toilets and devotions progressed at the same moment, who worshipped the idol reflected in their mirrors, and their God together; who gave audience at once to the chaplain and the hair-dresser, and joined in the

prayers read by the former, while the skilful fingers of the latter twined the long ringlets, braided the shining tresses, or laced the broidered boddice over the unsanctified heart.

But if Amanda pleads not guilty to this grave charge, and is virtuously indignant at the comparison to those historic dames, those Helens of a laxer age ; we must venture to assure her that there are other respects in which she bears them too strong a resemblance for denial.

Like them, she is somewhat too generous in the revealing of her charms ; like them, she will listen unreprovingly to words too bold, and grant too much to man's entreaty ; but she is prudent withal ; she always pauses, self-possessed and immovable, on the verge of an indiscretion, for it is not the compulsive ardor of a sensuous nature, but a cold, calculating barter for admiration that urges her to the brink of danger.

But when some true heart, wholly subdued by her spells, some honorable wooer, thinks he has noted those " weather signs of love," which prognosticate a happy suit, and the hour comes for him to ask that question which is the highest tribute he can pay to womanhood, how is Amanda moved by the invitation to " walk the long path " by his side ? Where is the bashful tremor that runs through a responsive heart ? Where is the mantling veil of rose that seeks to enshroud an innocent face from a lover's gaze ? Where is the downcast look of

maidenly confusion, the stifled breath that with this strange, new joy, should choke her utterance, or turn her words into sobs? True, a flush *is* on her cheek, but it is the exultant flag uplifted at victory. The snowy lid falls over the eye, but it is to hide the glance of triumph. The voice has a faltering cadence, but it is not the accent of womanly agitation.

Amanda feigns a most charming surprise at this unexpected declaration, she murmurs some incoherent platitudes about friendship, chides herself for the hardness of her heart, and is zealous, with honied words, to pluck out the sting from her rejection, that she may not wholly lose one of her train. Thus, year after year, she plays her game, with consummate tact and unflagging spirit, and daily counts the hearts she has won, as religiously as a devotee tells the beads of her rosary.

Strange to say, the French bullion of Amanda's attractions has brighter glitter than the true gold of purer graces, and she holds her empire longer than many a lovelier, worthier contemporary. Two or three generations of lesser belles fade around her before Time lays a destroying finger on her meretricious charms. Even he, the remorseless, is kept at bay by her witchcraft.

But, in the end, the law of compensation will not suffer violence. We dare to predict that the retribution of one of two, equally deplorable, fates, is awaiting the conquering Amanda. Either she

will miss the love of the only man whose affection she could have returned, and will spend her desolate and uncomforted age in mourning over the vanished triumphs which were her sole happiness, but which can never return; or else, just as she suspects that her light is beginning to wane, she will allow the most abject of her admirers, after numberless petitions, to swear himself her slave for life. But when he humbly encircles her taper finger with the golden round, the twain will change places. All the chains with which Amanda has manacled others will seem gathered together, and their weight heaped upon her own spirit; all the arrows she has sped will fly back and transfix her own heart. She will find the slave of yore transformed into the most unsparing of tyrants, and the dethroned sovereign will hopelessly sink into the humblest, dullest, most dejected of captives.

Hearken, fair Amanda, and be warned! Surrender at discretion! Lay down thine arms at the feet of some worthy suitor, yield thyself up trustingly to his mercy, and escape either destiny predicted.

THE MARRIED FLIRT.

WHO calls Melinda Belmont a flirt? She is only as attractive to mankind collectively as to the one especial man whose name she bears, whose domicile she graces with a regnant presence powerfully suggestive of feminine superiority and masculine nonentity. A flirt, forsooth? She will resent the title with virtuous indignation. With a majestic uplifting of her queenly head, she will ask you whether a woman, when she honors a man by uniting her destiny with his, necessarily enters into a compact to render herself odious to the rest of his sex?

Melinda had not won the name of a coquette before her marriage. A handsome, high-spirited girl, striking in figure, captivating in manner, brilliant in conversation, and not lacking intellect, she married young. Possibly, she fancied herself in love, or her suitor's delicious flatteries made her in love, with herself, which she mistook for being in love with him; a very common occurrence! At all events she evinced no shrewd, cold calculation in choosing among her many admirers; she neither selected the Crœsus, nor the Adonis, but yielded,

in womanly fashion, to the most ardent wooer. An eligible partner, of course, none but eligible men venture into the arena, to struggle for such a prize. Probably, she looked upon marriage as an inevitable necessity, the unavoidable, and very endurable, destiny of womanhood; and, with only sufficient reluctance to intensify her charms, she permitted the most devout worshipper to claim her as his idol, and enshrine her in his luxurious establishment; though certainly not with the potential understanding that his exclusive adoration could satisfy the needs of her soul.

Melinda's marriage with Mr. Belmont, if it wrought any change in her deportment towards other gentlemen, only rendered her more thoroughly at her ease in their society, more alluring, more delightful! Her sallies of wit gained piquancy, her manner acquired more perfect abandon, her beauty more brilliant expression. Always wilful and *exigeante*, she now grew half-imperious in appropriating devotion, as though she looked upon men in general as more entirely her slaves than before she assumed the unfelt chain which bound her to one man in particular. Consequently the willing vassals became more liberal of those "sweet observances," those nameless indescribable attentions so gratifying to a woman's self-love, because they tacitly exalt her to a pedestal, and lay such harmless tributes upon the altar of her vanity.

Melinda has an understanding with her conscience which keeps it in well-bred, silent subjection. The "still, small voice within" is dumb, though she permits whispered words that might startle ears for which they were not intended; though she returns telegraphic glances, whose meaning would hardly be translatable; though she allows the soft pressure of her hand; or wears upon her proudly heaving bosom, or in the coronal braid that encircles her regal head, the flowers some favored gallant gives her. She will even close her white fingers upon a tiny note, thrust unseen into her palm; it may only be "an innocent bit of poetry," it may be a few words which she must have blushed if she had heard uttered, though the color that deepens into a triumphant glow on her cheek can hardly be called a blush.

An unconquerable impulse makes her desire to turn the head of every man who approaches her, literally to unsettle his mind, and her surpassing charms enable her to carry her will into execution. She is emulous to subdue to her service not one, but *all.* None are too high, none too low, none too great, none too insignificant for the wide-spreading vine of vanity to twine its tendrils around, with undiscriminating grasp, and claim as fostering supports.

Yet among that group of adorers there is always one who is the preferred of the hour. One whom she distinguishes by claiming little services at his

hands, whom she permits to seek for what she wants, to wait upon her, to be useful to her in a thousand pleasant ways. Above all, one who understands that he must renounce the whole sex for her sweet sake, and bask in no woman's smiles, and hang upon no woman's words, but hers. But, by and by, the fickle Melinda grows tired of his assiduities, discards the favorite, and indulges in all the agreeable excitement of electing his successor, who becomes equally infatuated, equally subservient to her will, and, in time, equally wearisome.

Mr. Belmont, if he sometimes feels Othello pangs, conceals them too carefully ever to be classed with jealous husbands. He is virtually shut out of the charmed circle which his wife's magic draws around her. He sits at a distance, trying to look as though he were occupied with other interests, but secretly drinking in the musical rise and fall of her voice, softened to the low tone of high breeding; hearkening to the rippling gushes of her exultant laughter; listening to her sparkling thoughts, sham jewels dropped into gilt setting of glittering words; admiring the half voluptuous contour of her form, which is strikingly displayed by some picturesque attitude; smiling inwardly at the captivating changefulness, the bewitching caprices that keep her devotees on the *qui vive* to watch her varying moods, and weakly glorying in the sensation she creates, the admiration she excites.

Perhaps Mr. Belmont, who is a man of some

sentiment and more feeling, suppresses a sigh when he remembers that the very fact of calling this peerless being his own, deprives him of the happiness of enjoying her society, even of offering her any of the little courtesies which she receives from others with such winning affability, and rewards with such enchanting looks and words. But he would not have his best friend divine that puerile regret for the universe! Fashion, the *bête noire* of his imagination, would point her finger and laugh at him! Unendurable calamity!

It is generally admitted that Melinda, as Mrs. Belmont, is far more attractive to gentlemen than she had been as a young girl, more fascinating than any young girl can hope to be! Yet, be it understood, that she is never guilty of an imprudence that will risk her reputation, or furnish tempting food for scandal. The disease that gnaws, vulture-like, at her heart, is an insatiable craving for adulation, an unappeasable hunger that would make her barter her birthright of womanhood for Flattery's mess of pottage.

She would turn with righteous horror from a hapless sister who had lapsed from purity, who bore upon her bowed forehead the brand of shame, upon her pale cheeks the furrows worn by penitential tears. Melinda would draw aside her silken garments from the touch of such pollution. She would never suspect that the heart which beat beneath her velvet bodice was full of sin as foul, of

fouler sin, perchance, since unacknowledged and unrepented of; sin not brought forth into act, because her coldness, not her chastity, warded off temptation; because the iron shackles of society held her in compulsive restraint. But the bondage is merely external. Place but a window in Melinda's bosom, and that "rake at heart" cynical Pope finds in woman, will have too vivid an illustration!

How Melinda conducts her household is an enigma we shall not endeavor to solve. She does not attempt to assume its rule with that matronly dignity which proclaims itself the guiding spirit of the home department. Yet her domestic affairs glide on with tolerable smoothness, the wheels of the machine being oiled with lavish extravagance, with waste sufficient to save half a dozen families from starvation.

It has been said that the wifely face across the breakfast table is the one most likely to disenchant a husband. Perhaps Melinda has too much tact to run the risk of such a catastrophe. At all events, her husband's morning meal is usually a solitary one. Mrs. Belmont feels dull at the hour when the flowers are brightest, the birds sing sweetest, and Nature's dewy eyes open with their most refreshing smile. Languidly indolent, Melinda retreats into the chrysalis shell of her wrapper, and quietly mopes, like any veritable caterpillar, in its transition state. But when the day is

nearly spent, (alas! spent to what purpose?) the papilia comes forth in May-day glory, flies through a round of fashionable visits, or alights among the flowers in her drawing-room, to hold her court at home.

Mr. Belmont returns from his business to a late dinner, and finds that some of Melinda's friends have dropped in and been invited to remain. A *tête-à-tête* repast with her husband is an event of rarest occurrence. Anything so prosy should naturally be avoided; and would it not be absurd to waste such an elaborate toilet on him? However negligent her morning costume, she is now attired with faultless taste. Everything she wears becomes her *a merveille.* Her dress evinces the most exquisite perception of *les nuances* — for she never accidentally shocks a fastidious eye by the inharmonious mingling of color. At table she has more the air of a guest than hostess, but her husband does the honors with evident pleasure; no wonder, it is almost the only occasion upon which he ceases to be a cipher, if he does not positively "make a figure."

In the evening she has generally some engagement; she has arranged to attend a concert, the opera, the theatre, a lecture perhaps, or a ball, or a reception. Her husband, if not too much wearied by the duties of the day, accompanies her; but it is not upon his arm she leans; that would be *outré*, and so ridiculously Darby-and-Joan like!

If perchance she remains at home, there are always plenty of visitors, principally young men, who will help her to chase the evening hours. And Melinda plays and sings to them, with her eyes glancing up and down, and now and then resting upon some enraptured listener, who leans over the piano and drinks in the amorous words as though they were addressed to him. Are they not, for the moment?

The society of her own sex Melinda cannot abide. She scoffs at female friendships; talking to a woman bores her more than listening to a sermon. Caresses of women, to her, are positively sickening. Their tenderness — bah! it is all affectation, assumed to make them look interesting! She well knows the pretty dears hate each other heartily, and would rather bite than kiss, if they dared to be natural.

Melinda is a childless wife. A child's innocent touch would have opened a chamber in her breast and let a saving angel in to tear the false god, Self, from its altar. A child's holy breath would have blown away some of this earth-dust gathered upon her soul, and clogging all its heavenly motions. A child's guileless fingers would have drawn the wife's hand into that of her husband, and turned her face to his by the magnetism of mutual interest in one beloved object, at whose feet their sympathies could meet and embrace. Yet she rejoices

to be spared the cares of maternity! As well rejoice that she has foregone salvation!

Thus passes Melinda's budding spring and summer bloom. But the canker-worm in the fruit has wrought decay where should be autumnal mellowness. Her charms, almost before they reach maturity, begin to fleet, in spite of all the detaining arts of her toilet. Her once worshipped mirror becomes a taunting torment. Years write their record in ungracious lines across her brow, for no noble emotions, no high actions have beautified the chronicle. Inexorable Time quenches the fire of her eyes, and his attendant crows leave the pressure of unsightly feet at the corners. Her features, once so finely cut, grow sharp and harsh. Her "pretty petulance" degenerates into irritability. Her voice has caught a piercing shrillness which strikes the ear like a bayonet's point; possibly it is that tone which makes her repartee sound so much more cutting, so much less mirth-provoking than of yore.

There is no longer a flutter of excitement when she enters a crowd. The men who once gathered around her stand aloof, unconscious of her presence, or hover about some younger married flirt, who has jostled her from her pedestal in Vanity Fair. Poor Melinda makes desperate efforts to lure back the recreants, but the very exertion renders her manner forced, distressingly restless, peevish, exacting. Her failing assumption of juvenile

airs and graces is painfully ludicrous, it is but an awkward caricaturing of her former self.

What has the weary, dreary, faded, jaded wreck of brilliant womanhood to fall back upon? What consolation — what refuge is hers? Is there none to be found in her husband's sheltering arms? No; he is tired at last, of his youthful idolatry. In his own house he has never had a snug, quiet corner, an especial arm-chair, where he might sit, in dressing-gown and slippers, with that solace of manhood, a newspaper, in his hand, and he has gradually sought the society of men, the club-room, or the card-table as a substitute for the fireside of home. It is too late for Melinda to turn to him and seek, in his long slighted devotion, repayment for the neglect of the world; too late to find herself rejuvenescent through her husband's love, as Michelet maintains that a woman may be. Her bitterest retribution comes through an instinctive but tardy knowledge that there must be a joy, she never tasted, in reposing upon one true heart, without fear of change; a happiness beyond her conception, in hoping for and hoping with, in soothing and being soothed by another self; in clinging to one who needs her, whose life is incomplete without her; who makes her proudly glad in the consciousness that whatever she may not be to others, she is all in all to him.

But this comfort shall never be hers; and the desolate, dethroned sovereign looks with envious

eyes upon the unambitious wife, her youthful contemporary, who never dreamed of being a belle, whom Melinda scorned for her even, unpretentious ways, but who still retains a lingering freshness, a kindly warmth, a serene vivacity, a soul-renewed loveliness that have preserved a husband's devotion intact, and won from time-tried friends reverence and tenderness in abundance, and now make the nonpareil beauty of other days reflect despairingly upon her wasted opportunities, her hollow and valueless existence, and inwardly murmur, "Oh, that I could change places with her, here and hereafter!"

AN OLD MAID.

N old maid! Was there ever woman so wise that she could hear the obnoxious title applied to herself without a suppressed sigh? Though few are the old maids who might not have been wives if they had so willed, the sense of incompleteness, of undeveloped capacities, of unfulfilled duties, perforce will cause a passing pang.

But who that knows Miriam Pleasance feels that the life of an old maid is necessarily dreary, profitless, colorless? And *is* Miriam an old maid? Damsels, in the primrose season of youth, for whom the wedding ring binds, in its charmed circle, the manifold joys of an ideal Elysium, mockingly call her so; happy mothers, about whose necks twine the chubby arms of cherub childhood, keeping "low and wise" the "vines that bear such fruit," pityingly call her so; broken-hearted wives whose shattered idols prove all clay and ashes, whose pale lips, wreathed in smiles, veil, with Spartan heroism, the vulture preying on their souls, indignantly call her so. But mark how men, intellectual, thinking, feeling men, hesitate

to apply the ungallant appellation to sweet Miriam. Perhaps they are tongue-tied by that vague charm about her which half cheats one into the belief that she carries in her vestal bosom some mystical light, ("the lamp of human love,") and lets fall its radiance on the path she treads, on the hearth where she sits, on the face into which she gazes. Certain it is that all are strangely brightened by her presence.

Man recognizes the magic of a cheerful influence in woman more quickly, and more willingly, than the potency of dazzling genius, of commanding worth, or even of enslaving beauty. Thus men, in general, value Miriam's especial gift above the more brilliant endowments of her favored sisters.

In stature, Miriam is below the medium height. A form not voluptuously rounded nor charmingly fragile, but a neat, compact little figure, supple and light of motion. Not a single feature of her countenance can be termed beautiful, yet the whole face possesses a mobility, a capacity for rapidly varying expression, an indefinable harmony that produce the effect of beauty. Her white teeth sparkle between flexible lips, her black eyes dance and shine through jetty fringes, her dark hair, fine but not abundant, is knotted with peculiar grace at the back of an admirably balanced head.

Her dress is usually of some neutral tint, a sil-

ver gray, a delicate fawn, or a soft dove color, lighted up and relieved by the gleam of crimson, or dark blue, or purple ribbons.

Then her age; she has passed the season of youth, of summer perhaps, and is verging upon autumn. A rich, mellow autumn, an autumn full of gorgeous tints, an autumn whose forest leaves turn to scarlet and gold without withering, an autumn that makes one think the spring-time could hardly have been so beautiful. True, the dewy, evanescent, morning freshness is gone, but in its place reigns the more lasting, self-renewed freshness of mental and physical vigor. In a word, Miriam has reached and passed the green ascent of thirty-five, and is calmly descending the verdant slope beyond. But life has been all gain to her; she has gathered fruits of knowledge, and flowers of beauty, and herbs of balm on the way, and lost nothing she does not think it well to part with, in exchange.

We have seldom met with an old maid, upon the pages of whose early history there was not some love tale inscribed, some story of unrequited affection, of betrayed hopes, of love sacrificed to duty, or, of the grave's untimely snatching away. But, strange to say, there is no love-tale written upon Miriam's book of life. She could never have been numbered among that large class of maidens who, according to Rasselas, "think they are in love, when in fact they are only idle." Her

intellect is too highly cultivated, her penetration too acute, her life too active for her to form an attachment through the mere "*besoin d'aimer*," the longing, though often unconscious desire to be loved and protected, which is the secret spring of half the so-called love-matches in the world. A young girl's affections, like graceful tendrils formed to cling, too often twine themselves around the object nearest and most inviting, with no other vindication save that it was near and invited.

> "Seeing that to waste true love on anything
> Is womanly past question."

But if Miriam unconsciously admits that love is a "grand necessity" of existence, she feels that existence has other necessities. To bestow her heart, her judgment must approve the gift, and she has not encountered the being (though doubtless such exists) who could win the one with the approval of the other. This is the sole secret of her freedom.

Had Miriam been thrown upon her own resources to gain a livelihood, her energy of character, and her delight in use, would have impelled her to fill and dignify some of the few intellectual avocations which woman's hands and brains are allowed to grace. Her birth and wealth forbid, yet the current of life, with such an organization, can never become stagnant. Occupation is enjoyment.

Her perceptions are keenly alive to discover the work that is spread for her hands, and to do it when found. She religiously believes that there is work, Heaven-allotted, to all, in the great vineyard of the world, and that our work lies just within our grasp, if we will but look for and recognize the task. "Labor is worship!" says the prophet. "Labor is worship!" responds every throbbing pulse in Miriam's well-attuned frame. Like the woman of Bethany who poured the perfumed ointment (her humble tribute of love) upon the head of her Lord, she "did what she could?" What she could? What more could be required of her? Do what we can, as much as we can, all we can! Oh, how large would be the sum of works of the very humblest, feeblest, poorest, when counted up in the Hereafter, if they only "did what they could!" Alas! for the thousand opportunities of ministering and comforting thrown daily in our pathway, while we pass by on the other side through sheer unconcern, through "lack of thought" rather than "lack of heart!" Will they not rise up to convict us when we render the account of our stewardship in the great day.

With such thoughts ever quickening her to action, Miriam takes a lively, never failing interest in all things around her. No fellow-creature is indifferent to her. She regards all with a tender sympathy, a sympathy which breaks unaware through cold conventionalities, and fraternizes

with beings too seldom recognized as members of the human family. Towards the sick, the poor, the sad, the suffering in any shape, her hand is unhesitatingly stretched out. They need no credentials save the stamp of sadness, sickness, poverty, and prompt aid is true aid. She seems endowed with God's special license to console, to translate mysterious sorrows into promised joys, to strengthen the weak, to soften the hard, to reconcile the rebellious.

The history of any one day of her life would fill chapters with scenes of anguish, of passion, of hope, of happy consummations, that might adorn the pages of a romance.

Thus, Miriam, "the old maid," is not less happy, less useful, less beloved than the wife and mother whose heart and hands are full of alternate cares and blessings. Those upon whose path of life the smile of Miriam Pleasance shines, never after speak scornfully of an "old maid." We entertain but one fear for Miriam; it is that she will not always bear the vestal title around which she has woven such an indescribable charm.

A PLETHORA OF HAPPINESS.

"MISS MERRIWETHER, I believe?"

The young lady addressed courtesied assent, and glanced enquiringly at the speaker. Possibly there was an unconscious dash of admiration in that transient survey. The gentleman who stood before her was somewhat over six feet in height. His bearing was remarkably manly, a mingling of the soldier and courtier; perhaps it was rather too stately, but graceful withal. He had large, hazel eyes, a florid complexion, faultless mouth and teeth, close-curling, chestnut hair, a moustache and beard of such silken luxuriance that it could never have been profaned by a razor.

"I am Angelica Willington's husband," was his reply to the lady's look of interrogation.

"Mr. Willington! I am delighted to know you," exclaimed Ruth Merriwether, extending her hand, with hearty cordiality.

"Not more delighted than Angelica and I were when we heard of your unexpected arrival in Charleston. Angelica is such an invalid that she

did not feel able to call, but she charged me to bring you to her at once."

"I shall be truly rejoiced to see my dear schoolmate again," answered Ruth. "But is Angelica an invalid? How strange! When we were girls, at school together, — that's little more than six years ago, — she was the very realization of Moore's

> 'Young Envoy sent by health,
> With rosy gifts upon her cheeks.'

She never had an ache or a pain. What ails her? What is her disease?"

"I really cannot say," answered Mr. Willington, with a sigh; "and the doctors don't seem to know. Yet, she is never well; she has lost her strength and spirits, and is a confirmed invalid. I should be eternally indebted to any one who could discover what is the matter with her."

"Suppose I try to win that debt of endless gratitude. I have had quite an extensive experience in the sick room. Perhaps I may discover her ailment."

Mr. Willington's answering smile was one of politeness, not a confiding response to Ruth's proffer. He was too courteous to express his lack of faith in the skill of this unimposing physician in crinoline.

"Angelica is anxiously awaiting you; my carriage is at the door; will you not be ready soon, Miss Merriwether?"

Ruth's preparations were few, and rapidly made. The quickness of her movements betokened habitual activity. The elasticity of her very step was suggestive of mental energy. Her figure was *petite* but wonderfully supple, and under the influence of any elevating emotion, seemed to heighten suddenly. Her face, constantly glowing with animation, often warmed into beauty without possessing a single perfect feature.

In a few moments she was seated in Mr. Willington's splendid barouche, and drawn rapidly through the streets of Charleston by a pair of horses which were the envy of all *connoisseurs* of the noble animal.

Mr. Willington was an opulent planter of South Carolina. The aristocracy of Charleston is perhaps the most exclusive in the United States; and his birth, education, courtly manners, and remarkably fine person, rendered him one of its chief ornaments.

He was a strict observer of the laws of etiquette, and of all social conventionalities and proprieties. His high breeding was especially evinced in his deportment to the gentler sex. There was a sort of chivalric protection, a polite forbearance, a patronizing tenderness in his demeanor towards them, which distinctly proclaimed his own sense of superiority, through the very fact of his manhood, and his conviction that these "dear helpless creatures" were not designed to rise out of the sphere of pet-

ted childhood, and could never become equals, or even intelligent companions. "Mind" to him was of masculine gender, and he had no faith in the existence of a "woman of mind" who was not unfeminine. According to his creed, womanhood should ignore æsthetic tastes, and for her to show any disposition

> "To ponder the precipitous sides
> Of difficult questions,"

was a social crime.

To have discovered some electric sparks of genius accidentally flashing from the lips or the pen of his wife, would have rendered him the most miserable of men. Perhaps he was not very unreasonable in that respect. Genius, with her airy flights, her vivid imagination, her quick sensibilities, her abstraction, her states of alternate exaltation and melancholy, so incomprehensible to matter-of-fact natures, is too seldom an agreeable fireside companion. Men hardly care to see a Sappho or a Corinne sitting opposite to them at the breakfast table. Laurels are a nuisance on the hearthstone of home; fling them into the flames, or sweep them up with the ashes!

Angelica Raymond was the daughter of a Philadelphia banker. Mr. Willington met her at Newport, a little less than six years before the period at which we have introduced him to the reader. She was the reigning belle of the season, a sylph-

like beauty, just seventeen, with fair hair, dreamy blue eyes, and no very striking traits of character, The gallant Southerner beheld his *beau ideal* of womanhood, and fell madly in love with her. Angelica's heart was soon melted by his ardent wooing. She bestowed upon her large circle of admirers the most graceful bow of dismissal, and her hand upon the chivalrous Southerner.

In the autumn, he carried his bride to his luxurious home in Charleston, surrounded her with all the appliances of wealth, and gratified her caprices, until she found it a positive effort to think of anything more which she could desire.

During the five years of her married life, first a little son, and then a daughter had taught her ears the holy music of the word "Mother!"

Was she happy? Perhaps she did not ask herself the question precisely in that form. She was conscious that she was weary, lonely, constantly *ennuyée*, and she soon pronounced herself to be in feeble health. How many of the lovely valetudinarians who daily excite our pity are simply lovely idlers! How often is supposed ill health a pastime that ends in the retribution of a frightful reality!

Angelica had no apparent need for exertion, and she made none. Her children were tenderly cared for by devoted colored domestics, old family servants. Each little one had a "mammy" appropriated to its service as soon as it was born, and these

faithful guardians perfectly idolized their young charges, giving them open preference over their own children. And the little nurslings, with dawning intelligence, learned to love their "mammies" as well, if not better, than their own mother.

As for Angelica's household arrangements, they were attended to by servants who thoroughly understood their duties, and performed them with pride and pleasure. They would have been shocked, would have thought it a degradation of herself and a rebuke to them, if their young mistress had ventured to occupy herself with domestic concerns. She gave a few languid orders every morning, and her labors for the day were over. She was fond of her children, because they were lovely and endearing: but she saw them very seldom. She loved her husband with a dependent, leaning, up-looking affection, which threw the very burden of thinking upon another, a species of attachment which is particularly gratifying to such men as Mr. Willington. But of that sweet association, that constant interchange of thought, that community of feeling in which the charm of marriage lies, Mr. Willington and his young wife knew nothing.

Mr. Willington, though he had not ceased to admire the beauty of Angelica, though he honored her as his wife, the mother of his children, the head of his household, a being that especially appertained to him; though he was proud of her, and

had a positive tenderness for her, never thought of her in the light of a companion, a counsellor, a friend. To be obliged to pass an evening in her drawing-room, unless he was discharging the duties of host to a circle of guests, wearied him intensely. He found more congenial amusement at his club, at young men's card parties, at horse races, during the season of that fashionable Charleston amusement, anywhere, but at his own fireside. And yet, there sat the being whom he had so ardently loved, so passionately worshipped, less than six years before, and who was still the personification of loveliness, but a lovely nullity!

The husband left her in perfect freedom to occupy or amuse herself in any way that she fancied, provided always that she did nothing conspicuous, however good or useful; nothing that would attract public attention, applause or admiration, except indeed the legitimate admiration to which every beauty is entitled in the ball room. His great fear was, not that some of life's responsibilities might remain unfulfilled, but a dread that the hidden sanctity of his home might be invaded by public comment. He had nothing to fear from Angelica. Her indolence was an impenetrable shield, no flash of intellect was likely to force its way through that barrier, and betray itself by some startling action.

Angelica had not seen Ruth Merriwether for nearly six years. The young wife, after her mar-

riage, instead of encountering the fatigues of a journey to the North, had passed her summers at some of the fashionable springs of Virginia, while her husband travelled about, and paid her and the children occasional visits.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Mr. Willington, as the carriage drew up before a stately mansion, embowered by groups of magnolia trees, and standing in a spacious garden. Roses, honeysuckle, and jessamine, clambered together up the porch, and their long tendrils, floating in the breeze, formed an archway of natural garlands over the entrance. Ruth sprang from the carriage and ascended the marble steps without noticing Mr. Willington's punctiliously-offered aid; for, as the equipage stopped, the street door opened, and Angelica stood on the threshold. The friends embraced warmly.

"Come in, let me beg you to come in, Miss Merriwether," said Mr. Willington, offering his arm to Ruth. He had a nervous horror of anything so like public display as this womanly greeting, even beneath that screen of blossoming vines.

Ruth obeyed, but without accepting his arm, for hers was about Angelica's waist.

They had scarcely entered the drawing-room, when the latter sank into her usual languid, half-reclining attitude upon the sofa. Ruth sat beside her, fondly scanning her face as she chatted merrily.

The young wife was attired in a rose-colored silk wrapper, trimmed with rows of narrow black velvet, and edged with black lace. The skirt beneath was of finest embroidery. Her sleeves, open to the shoulders, disclosed her round, white arms. The long, shining ringlets that used to float over her shoulders, were looped up beneath a tiny, Marie Stuart cap of honiton lace. The toilet of an invalid became her. She looked supremely beautiful in spite of the weary, listless expression which quickly returned to her face, and seemed to be its habitual look. The roses that Ruth so well remembered, had somewhat faded from her cheeks, and her eyes were consequently less brilliant. These, and the look of hopeless lassitude which Ruth had never seen upon that countenance before, were the only changes that she could detect.

Ruth, who had a quick eye for the tasteful and beautiful, glanced admiringly around the room. The floor, of polished oak, reflected objects like a mirror. The luxurious furniture had no northern stiffness and show-aspect; evidently it was all intended for use. Pictures and statues, and objects of *virtu* were intermingled with costly vases filled with the most exquisite flowers, and hanging-baskets, from which long branches of the yellow jessamine waved like a golden drapery, and shed a delicious perfume throughout the apartment.

Ruth exclaimed with enthusiasm, "What magnificent flowers! I never saw more brilliant col-

ors! What perfect roses! That yellow jessamine is gorgeous! I suppose you gathered these in your own garden?"

Angelica looked up as if she had not noticed the floral decorations before. "They are pretty," she answered, with an indifferent air. "I did not gather them, that's Arena's province; she always keeps the vases and baskets supplied; she has decided taste that way."

"Have you any commands, Angelica?" asked Mr. Willington. "I will leave you ladies together. I hope to see Miss Merriwether at dinner time. Good morning."

As Mr. Willington passed the sofa upon which his wife was lying, he stooped and touched her forehead lightly with his lips, as was his wont on leaving the house for the day.

Angelica received the caress without returning and apparently without noticing it, for no change of expression passed over her features. Not that the salutation gave her no pleasure, she might have felt wounded if had it been forgotten, but she did not deem it necessary to make the exertion of a response, and her husband evidently expected nothing of the kind.

"Now, Angelica, dear," said Ruth, taking the little white hand, almost heavy with its wealth of sparkling gems, in both of hers, "tell me what ails you?"

"I can't tell; I don't know."

"But do you suffer? Are you really ill?"

"Of course, certainly! and I have such headaches! everything gives me a headache, and I am wretchedly low spirited!"

"Low spirited! why, you have everything to make you happy, have you not?"

"Yes, everything, I believe, everything in the world!" and she sighed heavily.

"Perhaps you do not take exercise enough. Do you walk out, or ride out every day, and move about, and occupy yourself with the household matters, and with the little ones?"

"I have not the strength for all that, besides it is not needful. The nurses look after the children and are devoted to them. I have admirable servants, they take charge of the household. As for walking, I don't walk; what's the use of walking, when one can drive? I don't ride because it's too conspicuous; but I drive out when the weather is fine and I am in the mood."

"How can you expect to feel bright and buoyant and well, dear, if you break all physical and mental laws? It is only by activity, by employment, that you can earn or deserve health, only by the use of your faculties that you can preserve their vigor. We must get you thoroughly interested in something, give you something to do."

"*Something to do?* You wouldn't horrify Mr. Willington by such a suggestion? Do you suppose he would allow his wife to work?"

"Yes, truly, if he would have her healthful and happy. Did you never hear of a nobleman wood-sawyer? Lord Elgin in his Canadian home used to fell and saw trees as industriously as though he were earning his bread. He *was* earning health and strength, which are quite as important as bread. Do you remember a beautiful injunction, concerning labor, from the sweet singer, Fanny Osgood? I heard the lines years ago, and they have haunted me ever since; they have been to me the song of a good angel, to scare away the demon of idleness; thus they run —

> "Work for some good, be it ever so slowly,
> Cherish some flower, be it ever so lowly,
> Labor! all labor is noble and holy!
> Let thy great deeds be thy prayer to thy God."

"I am afraid I should offer up no prayer, if that was to be the condition," said Angelica, listlessly. "It must be very fatiguing to have the mind constantly on the stretch, and always to feel as if there was something that must be accomplished."

"Not half so tiresome as to have nothing to think of, and nothing to do; that is the most wearisome work in the world, and wins the poorest reward; an income of *ennui*. For my part, I confess that I should be wretched if there was nothing in which I could interest myself; and I am sure that I should not only become (or fancy myself) an invalid, but probably I should be a dreadfully wicked person in

the bargain. I firmly believe in Satan's finding 'some mischief still for idle hands to do.'"

"Ah! but we have such different temperaments! You and I are so unlike!"

"Perhaps so; but we are governed by the same unalterable laws."

"*I* could not interest myself, as I have heard that you do, in schools for 'ragged children,' and in procuring employment for young women; in sewing societies, and all that sort of thing. I hate what busy people call their 'duties.' I think, generally speaking, the most tedious people in all the world are people who can't do that, or must do this, because it's a 'duty.'"

"And I think that duty is only another word for methods of earning happiness. Duty is something laid out at interest to bring in an income of pleasure. You need not seek your duties in 'ragged schools' and institutions for the employment of young women, or in 'sewing societies,' all of which seem so distasteful to you; leave these for the busy hands of old maids — such as I intend to be if I don't change my mind. A wife and mother has abundance of pleasant occupation in the circuit of her own home, if she will but think so, and seek for it diligently. But she must not fold her little hands with a martyr-like expression of patience, as you do now, and close her bright eyes upon all that is beautiful and joy-imparting around her. If she does, her energies will stagnate, — and" —

"Ah! Ruth, dear, you are so energetic, that's the word! you always were. But do you know I have heard Mr. Willington say that nothing fatigued and tormented him so much as energetic women; women who were always on the go, always striving to achieve some great end."

"Test his words! Prove whether they are correct, just for variety's sake. Try the experiment of rousing yourself up to some energetic employment, and see whether he will not naturally make more of a companion of the wife whose energies are all alive, than of the pretty doll of whom he must weary, and to whom he thinks he has done his duty by surrounding her with luxuries, and cheating himself into the belief that she is an invalid."

"Oh! he's the best husband in the world! I've nothing to complain of; he allows me to do just what I please. To be sure, we don't see much of each other; but I like him to amuse himself. Heigho! do you ever have the 'blues?' I have them every day."

"No, indeed. If I had, I should sentence myself to 'hard labor,' as the punishment, and certain cure of an attack. But, Angelica, I suppose you sometimes walk with Mr. Willington, and read with him, and form plans for the education of the children, or the entertainment of your guests, or"—

"No, I do not think I do. I can't read much; it gives me the headache. And when I walk, it is

in the garden, and men don't care to walk in gardens. You must see our garden; it really is the prettiest that I ever saw."

"Perhaps you love to take care of flowers," suggested Ruth, brightening.

"No, we have a capital gardener. Uncle Job is very fond of his flowers. It's Arena's place to gather them and make bouquets. You'll find them in every room in the house, as a matter of course."

"But I should think you would at least like to cull and arrange the flowers yourself. That must give you pleasure."

"Why should I take the trouble when I have some one to do it for me?"

Ruth, who had preserved great serenity during this conversation, though she was shocked and grieved at her friend's deplorable state of mind, now became fairly roused. She answered in a tone so earnest and excited that it startled Angelica out of her lethargy.

"Why should you take the trouble to enjoy? Truly, that you may not lose the capacity for enjoyment which God has given you as a reward for the healthful use of your faculties! Why should you take the trouble to think, to feel, to sympathize? Because, without thought, without feeling, without sympathy, you must become a living clog, a vegetable nonentity, a breathing petrifaction! Because the mental paralysis which is gradually falling upon your spirit, would deprive soul and

body of their noblest powers! Ah, Angelica! I laughingly said to your husband that I should discover the disease under which you are laboring, and I hardly thought to keep my word so easily. Your ailment is a plethora of happiness, a surfeit of good gifts. You have not paid your tribute of gratitude to the lavish Giver of these blessings, by putting them to use. You have not made them reach others; they have not radiated from you, as their centre, and fallen brightly on a wide circle extending around you, and they turn to curses, to disease, and weigh upon you like a nightmare. Privation would teach you their value. Sorrow would perhaps restore the tone to your mind, reinvigorate your body, and bring back the consciousness of happiness which, for the time being, you have lost."

Angelica listened as though the weary spell under which she was bound had suddenly been broken. She was no longer reclining upon the sofa, but sitting up erect and strong. Her lips quivered and her blue eyes dilated, as she gazed upon Ruth's beaming countenance, and drank in her words. When the latter ceased speaking there was a pause of a few seconds; then Angelica replied, with an emotion which animated her whole frame and illumined her countenance with a higher beauty than it had ever yet known:

"Ruth, I wish I could feel as you do!"

* * * * * * *

Years passed before Angelica and Ruth met again, for the latter was only travelling through Charleston, and left the next morning. But, what small events influence a life! What casual words sounding in the ears, and echoed over and over again in the memory, affect a whole existence! The history of nations shows the wonderful agency of trifles in working out important ends. A basin of water spilled on Mrs. Masham's gown, led to the removal of Marlborough, and so to the peace of Utrecht, which had its influence upon all Europe. An idle boast of the Duke of Buckingham, caused a terrible war between England and France.

The accidental visit, the unpremeditated admonition of Ruth Merriwether, changed the whole current of Angelica's life. When she felt oppressed by that sense of weariness and dejection which had long weighed upon her spirit, Ruth's voice exclaiming, "a plethora of happiness!" would ring mockingly in her ears. "A plethora of happiness, a surfeit of good gifts." Yes, it was true, she acknowledged it to herself; that was her disease. She had nothing to desire, and she had lost the very consciousness, the faculty of happiness. When once she commenced to reflect, she noticed that her husband found no enjoyment at his own home, that he sought his pleasures elsewhere; and she said to herself, "A doll, not a companion, he wearies of me; Ruth said he would." She observed that her little ones clung

to their "mammies" in preference to her, and Ruth's words would sound in her ears again.

Those words had been a new revelation to Angelica; they had placed in her hands the golden key which unlocked the secret of her lassitude, and languor, and depression.

For some time after she became cognizant of her own state, the evil seemed aggravated by being comprehended; but the dangerous illness of her little son wakened the mother in her heart, and gave her a motive for exertion. She hung over his bed day after day, and forgot her *ennui*, her ailments, her low spirits, in ministering to the little sufferer. Then followed a thrill of joy, amounting to ecstasy, when the sweet invalid's first signs of returning health gladdened her maternal eyes.

"Ruth was right, again. Sorrow was good for me. I *was* suffering from a plethora of happiness," she inwardly exclaimed.

That conviction and that confession were the heralds of a happy change. It was not effected in an hour or in a day; it was hardly perceptible at first, but was gradually felt throughout the household, by children, servants, friends, dependants, — most of all, by Angelica's husband.

Ah! no one divined how simple was the magic that wrought this wonderful metamorphosis! A few passing words of truth, dropped from the kindly lips of a friend, and the discovery of an ailment which proved to be only "a plethora of happiness."

ANGEL CHILDREN.

TO whom is the hour of twilight so sweet as to children? Too tired to play, and yet unreconciled to the nightly trial of being put to bed, children, half the world over, have simultaneously raised their tender voices, and consecrated this hour to story-listening.

At twilight, five sisters were cosily gathered around the dear paternal hearth. "Sisser, tell me a tory!" said little Virginia, climbing on my knee and circling my waist with her tiny arms until the dimpled hands met, and then nestling her curly head upon my shoulder, "Tell me a pretty tory!"

There is no refusing our petted Jenny.

"What must the story be about, Jenny?"

"Oh, about fairies and dood children."

"Shall I tell you about three little sisters whom I knew, who are all angels now, and shall I tell you of a heavenly dream I once had about them?"

"Yes, about angels; angels will do as well as fairies."

"Well, then, listen. One Christmas morning I was sitting in church amongst a number of cher-

ished friends; the church was gayly decorated with evergreens; the Star of Bethlehem shone on the eastern wall; the Sunday School children had sung an exquisite hymn, written for the occasion; our beloved pastor, in his holiest mood, had spoken words of promise and encouragement; had breathed upon us 'soft rebukes in blessings ended;' around him were hopefully happy faces, but amongst the cheerful crowd I missed one dear, familiar countenance. A father sat surrounded by his children, but their mother was absent. She was at home watching over a little daughter who was very ill. The family lived a short distance from the city, and after service I drove out to see the sick child. Among my Christmas presents was a basket made of moss and filled with green-house flowers, — camelias, heliotropes, orange blossoms, jasmines, roses, etc. The handle, too, was woven of flowers, embedded in moss. I thought the refreshing sight of the flowers might do little Clara good, so I stopped on the way for this lovely floral gift. At the door of Clara's home I was greeted by a host of little ones, and first they took me into the parlor, where stood a Christmas tree, so tall that it nearly reached from the floor to the ceiling. The spreading branches were loaded with gifts, and waxen lights were scattered about amongst the smaller boughs. The children delightedly exhibited their abundant Christmas presents, and they led me up stairs to their mother's room. As they

entered there, every one trod softly, and the gay voices were hushed to whispers. On a small couch, at the foot of her mother's bed, lay little Clara, a patient, gentle child, about seven or eight years old. She was lying so motionless that you might have thought her some beautiful statue; her thin, tiny hands were as white as the sheet on which they were extended; her countenance had an alabaster hue, and her large dark eyes were looking fixedly upwards towards the ceiling, as though they could see more than we saw. The mother sat near the bed, her face blanched with apprehension, and around her eyes were red circles that showed she had been weeping, perhaps the whole of that Christmas night. Little Clara did not notice us when we entered, nor did she answer when I spoke to her, but when I brought the mossy basket to the bedside, she feebly lifted up her shadowy hand and laid it on the flower-woven handle, and looked in my face and smiled one angelic smile of thanks.

"The next morning the Christmas tree still stood in the parlor, but in the chamber above lay a little coffin; within reposed the earthly form of a lovely child, bestrewed with flowers, but the angels had borne away little Clara to her eternal home.

"Lizzy was the name of one of Clara's younger sisters. She was called after a most beloved friend of her parents. Lily was the pet name by which

she always went. Lily was her father's especial darling, the sunlight of his home and his heart. The moment he entered the house, she flew into his arms; wherever he went, she was at his side, her baby hand seldom out of his; if he were sad, she comprehended it in a moment, and would charm away his gloom with her merry prattle, her arch, infantile graces; if he were gay, she was full of wildest sport. When he was out of the house, Lily seemed a different being; all was seldom well with her until he returned; at night she slept in his arms, and in the morning, though the world called him a grave, wise man, they frolicked together like children. If such a thing could be, Lily was almost too dear to her father, and he to her. Not long after Clara was summoned away, little Lily fell sick. Father and mother watched her night and day with breaking hearts; but her Heavenly Father had called her; he sent his messenger to gather this fair flower also, and, as she lay on the bosom of her earthly father, the beauteous blossom was plucked.

"The youngest child of all, the baby, the sweetest, brightest little creature, was called Anna. She, too, was named after a dear friend. Before Christmas came again, little Anna sickened, as did her sisters. How her mother clasped her to her yearning breast, and prayed the Lord to spare this one, her baby, her latest born, whose joyous presence had enabled her to bear the parting from her

other little ones! The Lord knew best what was good for little Anna; his heavens needed this bright infant also, and he called her to be one of his angels!

"I had taken a far-off journey after the Christmas morning when I saw Clara, and the next time I beheld my dear friends, the traces of great suffering, the agonies of that treble grief, were visible in their countenances. The mother's face, in particular, was full of deep and settled sorrow. She talked much of her darlings. She took me to the room where I had last seen little Clara on that Christmas morning, to the nursery where I had played with Lily and Anna, and showed me three white brackets on the walls, supported by cherub heads. One stood in the mother's room, and held the toys of little Clara, — those she had loved best, had played with last; the other stood in the father's study, and held the silver cup of little Lily, her toys, and the objects she had last touched; the third stood in the nursery, and held Anna's silver cup and baby remembrances. Each bracket had been decked by the fond mother with a wreath of white flowers. As she took up the toys, one by one, and told me little anecdotes concerning them, the tears rained down her cheeks and choked her utterance. The remaining children looked up daily to these toy-covered brackets, and felt that some portion of the room was still devoted to their departed little sisters. Among these sacred

treasures were three daguerreotypes. One represented Clara, lying upon the bed where I last saw her, with flowers scattered over her pillow; it was taken after her spirit had fled. Lily's daguerreotype showed a handsome, arch-looking little girl, with a tiny basket in her hand, and a pair of fine dark eyes fixed on something very earnestly and lovingly; I should say it must have been her father's face. Baby Anna's eyes were closed; she lay amongst flowers, with a few buds clasped in her round, chubby hands. She seemed in a blessed sleep, but when that picture was taken, little Anna had awakened in 'a brighter morn than ours!'

"I thought very often of those three little sisters, all summoned away between Christmas and Christmas, and one day I had a dream in which I saw them all; and this was the dream: —

A DREAM OF HEAVEN.

"I saw a garden so luxuriant with flowers and foliage, that it seemed as though

> 'The very rainbow showers
> Had turned to blossoms where they fell,
> And sown the ground with flowers!'

"Branches, covered with bloom, leaned towards each other, and twined themselves together in natural bouquets. From the trees hung crimson and purple and amber-colored fruit, pomegran-

ates, figs, plums, and many others, such as I had never seen, and their names I did not know. These bright-hued fruits appeared transparent, and through the clear juice sparkled the polished seeds and stones, like precious gems.

"In the centre of the garden rose two trees with widely spreading branches, covered with snow-white blossoms. Grape vines clambered up the trunks of each tree and wound themselves in graceful festoons through the boughs. The soft air wafted the floating tendrils of one vine to the topmost branches of the opposite tree, until they formed a leafy bower. From its arch hung clusters of golden grapes, glistening through wreaths of pearl-like bloom. Within the bower I saw a mossy mound. Violets, anemones, lilies of the valley, and the blue eyes of the 'forget-me-not' peeped through the velvet covering, making a richly variegated and living broidery. The mound appeared in the shape of a seat, half rustic and half regal.

"The flowers in this garden exhaled an aroma so penetratingly delicious, that they seemed to be sending up perpetual thanksgivings for their bright existence, while diamond dew-drops glittered like costly gifts on their expanding bosoms. The atmosphere was singularly pure, exhilarating, life-stirring. The sky shone resplendent with the softest, most roseate hues of early morning.

"A group of angelic children gambolled through

the garden. Some had chaplets on their heads, and some had garlands twined about their bosoms, or girdles of tiny leaves mingled with violets and rose-buds, wound around their waists; and some had woven bracelets of flowers and bound them on their arms, and then fastened the flowery manacle to the arm of an infantile companion; these pairs were always seen together, they seemed as one, each as half of the other, and only when united forming a complete whole. The children were sporting with a white lamb, decking his pure throat with leafy chains, embracing and kissing him.

"Near the joyous crowd stood an angel, clad in vesture that had the whitely varying hues of an opal; the hem was wrought with stars of gold, the zone was clasped beneath her breast with a single, ruby, heart-shaped. A fillet of pearls encircled her head, one large ruby shone in the centre, and emitted such a stream of roseate rays, that they formed a halo above her brow. From beneath the pearly band her hair flowed loosely to her knees, not in ringlets, but in shining waves that looked like a veil of woven amber. The perfect beauty, the mild effulgence of her countenance no language could describe. It was turned towards the children, and I noticed that when she smiled upon them, her face grew so radiant that a beam of light seemed to strike on their heads and illumine their hair. She watched them in their sports; they were

gathering flowers, and, strange to say, when they plucked the blossoms from the stems, other blossoms instantly appeared in their places, no stem was ever left bare. As the children sprang over the mead, the flowers only bowed their heads, and rose up brighter, and fresher, and sent out a more exquisite perfume at their infant touches.

"And now the angel-girl, with a gliding step, drew near the bower and seated herself on the mossy throne. She lifted her beautiful arm and took from the branch of the tree on her right hand a harp, cut out of a single pearl, with strings of silver and gold. The light touch of her fingers drew forth such an ecstatic sound that it thrilled through the band of sporting children; with one accord they turned their faces towards her, flew to the bower, and gathered themselves closely about her knees. The white lamb followed them and laid down softly at the angel-girl's feet. As her fingers ran through the silvery strings, she sang the hymn of the angels, when the Saviour was born, when the star shone in the East, and the shepherds watched their flocks by night, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!' Her voice was so softly, liquidly melodious that it seemed but the speaking tone of the golden and silver strings. As she sang, birds, with gorgeous plumage, lit upon the trees that formed her bower, and when she paused, they warbled a chorus. When she resumed her hymn

of praise, they joyfully fluttered their brilliant wings, and it seemed as though a sparkling shower of gems was rained into the balmy air. Then the angel laid down her harp and the children caressed her, and resumed their sports with greater gladness than ever. She sat still in her bower, but watched them with loving eyes. Very soon they returned to her, as though they were weary of feeling her so distant from them. Then she spoke to them tenderly, but it was in angelic language, which has a softer, more flowing sound than any human tongue. She told them of the Saviour upon earth, the earth from which they came, and that he was once a little child on that earth himself, and that he had taken little children in his arms and blessed them, and said to his disciples, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' As she spoke, the children looked up and saw a rainbow arching itself over the garden, and their hearts were filled with delight; they appeared to understand something as they gazed on that heavenly bow, that I cannot explain.

"Suddenly the angel paused and said 'Hark!' then turned her face towards one side of the garden, where I beheld a golden gate. Beside the gate stood an angel of wondrous loveliness, she seemed to be watching. And now she opened the gate, and, as it flew back, it gave forth a sound of joy and triumph. Beyond the gate there was a

dense mist, and in the distance, through the dark way, appeared a third angel, leading a child, a timid, bewildered little girl. As they passed the gate, the flowers all flashed with new brightness and breathed out a sweeter fragrance, the garden was flooded with a more golden light, the trees seemed to bend their boughs, hung with jewel-like fruit, as though they invited the new guest to pluck them, the bright-plumaged birds sent forth one long note of glad greeting, and the face of the angel-girl in the bower shone like the morning star.

"The angel that led the little child was very beautiful; but in her countenance there was a serious sweetness, as though she had gazed on the sorrow of others until it had cast a shadow on her angelic beatitude.

> 'Her dress seemed wove of lily leaves,
> It was so pure and fine,' —

and all about her there was a strange whiteness. She was the Angel of Death. As she drew near, I recognized the little girl, it was Clara! My little friend Clara, whom I had seen lying on her couch, so wan and ill, that Christmas morning! Clara, as she entered the garden, looked around joyfully, and her step grew quicker and lighter. The Angel of Death led her to the sister angel, sitting in the bower. She folded her arms around Clara and pressed her to her bosom with a loving welcome,

and Clara felt as though she knew her, and her kiss seemed just like the fond kiss of her own mother. Then Clara turned to the group of happy children, who received her as a companion. They embraced her in turn, and it seemed to her as though she had long known and loved them all. Then the little lamb leaped up against her, and she caressed it and stroked its snowy wool. Soon the children led her away to show her their garden. I could not hear what they said, but the sound of their joyous laughter came to me, and I knew Clara's voice above the others, she never laughed so happily upon the earth. I saw her new companions take her to a lovely lake. Upon its crystal waters grew lilies even larger than the *Victoria Regia*, of which you have heard that upon its leaf a child can stand securely. As the children came to the edge of the lake, the lilies floated towards them and touched the shore. Then some of the little ones put out their tiny, white feet into the lily-cups, all among the quivering yellow stamens, and sat down in the snowy bowls, and the inner leaves seemed to fold around them to hold them safely, and the outer leaves spread themselves like sails; and so they floated about the lake, clapping their hands with gleeful shouts.

"I cannot tell how long a time passed, for in that world there is no time that is counted as with us, but it seemed only a short period, when the angel-girl gathered the children around her again

and said, 'Hark! another young child is coming from the earth!' And the angel at the gate threw open the golden portals, and again they gave forth the melodious sound, and in the distance was seen the Angel of Death, leading a little girl through the dark way, and, as they entered the gate, again the flowers flashed with new brightness and sent forth their sweetest odors, and the light grew more golden, and the rainbow-hued birds flew about with songs of joy, and the trees bent their boughs laden with luscious fruit. The gate closed, and I could see that the little girl bore something in her hand; it was a lily-branch. As she drew near the bower, little Clara suddenly bounded forward and caught her in her arms, crying out, 'It is Lily! my little sister Lily!' Lily clasped her arms tightly about Clara, and no longer looked frightened, and Clara took her to the angel and to her own young companions, and they all welcomed her with delight.

"The time was very short when there came again the musical sound of the opening of the golden gate; the flowers, the birds, the air, the trees, all gave their greeting. The Angel of Death passed through the dark valley into the heavenly garden, carrying an infant very carefully and tenderly on her bosom. She drew near Clara and laid the infant in her arms. The baby opened her eyes as though from a sweet sleep, and knew Clara, and laughed out right merrily; and she saw Lily and stretched out

her little arms to twine them round her neck, and Clara and Lily rejoiced over the coming of baby Anna. Indeed there was more joy amongst all the children at her arrival than they had felt before, for she had passed through that golden gate so young she had fewer earthly stains about her.

"'Let us crown her with flowers!' said one. 'Let her play with our white lamb!' said another. 'Let us take her to sail in the lily-boats!' cried another. 'Let us ask our dear guardian to sing to her!' Little Anna was tenderly laid on the lap of the guardian angel, and the hearts of the three sisters overflowed with perfect joy.

"That angel was once on this earth, a heavenly, minded girl. She had loved young children very dearly, and, when she died, her occupation in heaven was to instruct and watch over the children and infants who came from earth to that paradisiacal garden. If the mother, who mourned so deeply over her three lost treasures, could but have seen them there, would she not have exclaimed—

'—— Content,
Our love was well divided;
Its sweetness following where they went,
Its anguish stayed where I did.

'Well done of God to halve the lot,
And give them all the sweetness;
To us the empty room and cot—
To them the heaven's completeness.

'To us these graves — to them the rows
The mystic palm trees spring in;
To us the silence in the house,
To them the choral singing!'

"And how does Jenny like the story?" I asked.

Jenny looked up with thoughtful eyes. "But do you believe that little Clara and Lily and Anna went to a garden like that, when they died, and were taught by an angel, and were so very happy?"

"I do believe so!"

THE ANTICIPATIONS AND REALITIES OF A CHILDREN'S PARTY.

MRS. SYLVESTER had a passion for children. She entertained certain strange sentiments concerning them, at which her friends marvelled and smiled aside. She cherished favorite theories concerning the holy atmosphere that surrounds childhood, the guardian angels that follow in children's steps, and fold invisible arms around their tiny forms to shield them from danger, the unseen hands that guide them, the unearthly voices that teach. The music of a child's jubilant laugh, though it sounded in the distant streets, and she knew not from what voice it rang, found an involuntary echo in her heart and upon her lips. The soft touch of a child's clinging fingers sent a thrill of pleasure through her frame. Not the stars in their blue canopy, nor the flowers on their emerald beds, nor the glitter of precious stones, nor the noblest triumphs of the chisel or the brush, were half so beautiful in her sight as childhood's innocent eyes, glowing cheeks, dewy

lips, and furrowless brow, upon which she saw God's superscription of purity legibly written. In short, Mrs. Sylvester was what the world called romantic. A rather vague term, which means, in this instance, that she was inclined to look upon all creation in its poetical aspect; to throw an ideal halo around the common-place, and was so pertinaciously resolved to behold only the beautiful, that she too often ignored its desirable alliance with the practical and useful.

Mrs. Sylvester was not very kindly affected towards those mothers who unhesitatingly avowed that their maternal duties pressed heavily upon them, that their cares outweighed their joys, that their children in infancy trod on their feet, and in youth trampled over their hearts; in fact, that they themselves strongly resembled that old woman in the shoe, commemorated in the classics of the nursery, who had so many little ones she never knew what to do. Mrs. Sylvester was uncharitable enough to assert that such mothers could not be good Christians, although they knelt devoutly at the communion-table, and were shining lights in the high places of the church. But be it remembered, Mrs. Sylvester had no children of her own, and her inexperience made her all the more reprehensible in judging her child-ridden neighbors.

Mrs. Sylvester, however, had young sisters. Her Virginia home was distant from the paternal mansion, and great was her pride and joy when

those fondly-beloved, juvenile sisters paid her their first visit. She was in high glee at the obvious propriety of giving a children's party. Accordingly invitations were sent out in the most thoughtlessly liberal manner. Mrs. Sylvester's circle of acquaintance chanced to be very extensive, and the "little folks" of many households were bidden without any reference to age or number.

But though Mrs. Sylvester's social circle was large, and her intentions vaguely grand, her house was small, very small, a mere cottage, and where she purposed to locate the children within doors, she had no very definite idea. On one side of the cottage there was a spacious dell-shaped garden, Mrs. Sylvester's especial delight, and here the children might ramble about, and play games and make merry, and partake of refreshments until evening drew nigh.

Mrs. Sylvester had literally ordered the house to be "turned out of doors," to make room for the youthful assemblage, and the apartments had been ruthlessly dismantled of furniture. In the large dining-room, (the only room by which the term "large" could, by a stretch of courtesy, be applied,) a magic lantern was to be exhibited. Mrs. Sylvester had procured this lantern from Paris for the express amusement of her young friends, but the lens being very powerful and designed for a long hall, it played as appropriate a part in Mrs. Sylvester's dining-room, as the Vicar of Wakefield's family painting in his parsonage.

It was early in May. The day for the much-talked-of party came. The weather was magnificent. The cool, vernal air was laden with the perfume of opening blossoms, and the rays of the sun were tempered by flying clouds.

When Mrs. Sylvester had finished her preparations, had plundered her own garden and the gardens of her neighbors, to convert the cottage into a bower of roses; had seen that the magic lantern was trimmed and the glasses in order, and had profusely decked the supper-table, she sat down and revelled in thought over the pleasure in store for her. How lovely the children would look! With what gladsome feet they would bound over the green turf and gravel walks! How pleasant it would be to hear their merry peals of laughter, to watch their harmless gayety, and to feel that they owed their innocent enjoyment to her! Surely those bright human flowers, in their rose-colored, and violet, and lily-white raiment, would adorn the garden with a living loveliness surpassing all the floral beauty it had known before.

Five o'clock arrived. That was the hour at which the tiny guests were bidden. The young sisters were dressed and ready, and Mrs. Sylvester, as she stood with one fair-featured little maiden on either side of her, indulged in some gratified reflections relative to their unsurpassable sweetness and beauty, which it would not have been good taste to communicate to the mothers of the expected visitors.

The hour had scarcely sounded when the first carriage drew up, and the open windows revealed closely packed, delighted faces within. Mrs. Sylvester received the children at the gate, introduced them to her sisters, and, under the escort of the latter, dispatched them to the garden. They had taken but a few steps when another and another carriage deposited its goodly load, and the little sisters had to be recalled, and the ceremony of introduction repeated. Again dismissed, they were not half way to the bower in the centre of the garden, before they were summoned back; and this happened again and again, until the children began to pour in with such torrent-like rapidity that presentation was perforce abandoned.

Mrs. Sylvester was in raptures as she contemplated the groups of beaming faces around her. The brows of some were encircled with chaplets of natural flowers, and the bright ringlets beneath were lustrous with the smoothing of a fond mother's hand. Some children wore garlands fastened from their shoulders, which gave a most picturesque effect to white attire; the waists of others were girdled with fresh ivy, and their dresses looped with opening buds; others carried bouquets in their hands and on their bosoms. All eyes were feasted upon flowers, and every breath of air was redolent with delicious odors. The little girls were graceful in the extreme, with that sweet demeanor, blushingly modest yet not awkwardly

shy, half timid, half composed, and altogether captivating, so peculiar to Virginia maidens. And there was a dove-like softness in their clear eyes, and the stamp of refinement upon their beauty, which greatly heightened its charm.

A little later the boys arrived, of course not in carriages, like their dainty, satin-slippered sisters. They came as though in deputations, ten or twelve together, to keep each other in countenance. There was the decided look of "Young America Fear Nothing" in the faces of these embryo statesmen and rulers of the land, an air which conveyed the impression that they felt an invisible flag of freedom eternally waving over their heads. Their physiques were wonderfully fine, and their manners characterized by that bold self-reliance and laughing scorn of the dominion of womanhood, which ripens, in maturer years, into bravery, tenderness, and chivalric protection.

Mrs. Sylvester felt somewhat less at ease when these incipient politicians and lawgivers, of various sizes and ages, hurried past her with a slight bow, or an unconcerned shake of the hand, and congregated together on one of the verdurous slopes of the garden, apart from the girls yet overlooking them, and Mrs. Sylvester nervously fancied, with eyes that meditated mischief. But to this startling, intrusive idea she would not give a moment's entertainment.

The rush of boys continued, now and then

broken by a fresh arrival of young ladies, somewhat less infantine than the early comers,—among those were babies in the arms of nurses. There were at least a hundred children assembled, and the human stream still flowed cottageward.

Mrs. Sylvester could not leave her post to start the anticipated games, but she deputed some young ladies to undertake this task, charging them to invite the boys to join in the sports and mingle with the girls. Task? It proved a task indeed; one not to be accomplished by any feminine agency. To engage in games with girls did not comport with the precocious dignity of Young America. The little maidens made several futile attempts at "puss in the corner," and "tag," and "Mason and Dixon's line," etc., but the crowd was too great, and the games were hopelessly abandoned.

Mrs. Sylvester began to get agitated and confused as she watched these failing efforts, from her station at the gate; but her attention was soon taken off by new comers.

By and by, during a few moments' ebb in the current, she turned her eyes again towards the garden, that garden which she tended with so much care, every tree, and shrub, and flower of which she knew and loved. What a scene met her astonished gaze! Some of the boys had tied the long grass, just ready for the scythe, into knots, and, as the little damsels bounded unsuspiciously over the turf, one after another stumbled and fell,

rolling down the green slopes, staining their white dresses, and scattering the rose-leaves from their crushed garlands. Ah, lovely little maidens! when you have wandered, with these very boys, out of the gardens of childhood, happy are ye if they lay no snares in your verdant pathway, to trip your heedless feet, and shake the roses of hope and joy from your brows!

Another recreant band is bending down the supple young fruit-trees, and swinging from the branches, sending showers of tiny green apricots, peaches, and pears through the air.

Another set is running and leaping over the blossoming shrubs and bushy young trees. Some boys clear them with wonderful bounds, some miss the leap and fall into the midst of fig-trees and young quince-trees, that give promise of much fruit. That boy yonder, with the bright black eyes, flashing through his elfin locks, has alighted in the very centre of a beautiful pomegranate bush; another has tumbled into the outspread arms of a splendid English bay, and an audible crashing of branches accompanies the feat; a third, — no, he clears that luxuriant crape-myrtle with marvellous agility. It was hardly a leap; his well-knit form darted, flying through the air. High flights attend that boy hereafter!

But what are those two lawless urchins yonder, doing? Good gracious! they are climbing up the wire trellis that forms the sides of the summer-

house, and in their ascent dragging away the jessamine, and rose, and honeysuckle vines with which it is draped. What can they be seeking? oh, horror! they are surely bent on reaching and robbing the tiny bird-house, where four happy wrens are brooding over their young. The male birds are wildly flying over the heads of the mischievous twain, uttering doleful prayers for mercy; Mrs. Sylvester echoes their cries, as she deserts her post and runs to their protection. She had borne, with a sort of distracted patience, the loss of the fruit, the destruction of favorite trees, the trampling of bushes, but this threatened robbery of the birds' nests broke the spell, and put forbearance to flight.

The young rebels scrambled down, and took to their heels as she approached, and their resonant laughter was the only answer to her remonstrances.

Then she rushed about, appealing to this boy and to that, to spare the fruit, the trees, the shrubs, the birds. They desisted for a moment, but their sports were resumed the instant her back was turned. She was growing dizzy and bewildered; the turbulent waves of boyhood were swelling up around her, and threatened to bury, a thousand fathoms deep, all her beautiful visions of childhood. But had she not wished that the children would enjoy themselves? And these boys were only enjoying themselves in the fashion most congenial to their sex.

She overheard one merry imp whispering to another, "Law me, Jim, aint Mrs. Sylvester in a stew!" — not a very classic expression, but emphatically descriptive of her state, as her burning cheeks and simmering eyeballs could testify. She had fancifully compared the children in the garden yonder, to flowers, and, carrying out the simile, she now felt herself to be a full blown, walking peony, with scarlet complexion and quivering leaves.

The frightened girls, some bruised by their falls, some with their dresses soiled and torn, some with tears glistening in their sweet eyes, were grouped together as far as possible from their pitiless tormentors. What was to be done? The spirit of mischief had been let loose, and could only be trapped and put in bonds by some skilful *ruse.*

Mrs. Sylvester, when a little presence of mind returned, remembered that refreshments (in accordance with another of her romantic ideas,) were to be handed about in the open air. This would only aggravate existing evils; but refreshments might bait the trap to lure the young destroyers out of their conquered territory.

She returned to the house, and sent a messenger to say that cake and lemonade awaited the company within doors. What a rush of flying feet towards the cottage followed that announcement! But the stratagem had succeeded. The garden

was empty, the hall and dining-room thronged in a moment. All the boys were in advance, and held the best positions to be served, for the little girls had walked quietly, their arms around each other's waists, and with steps that betrayed no indecorous haste.

The room was so crowded that it was hardly possible for the servants to pass with their trays. No need for them to make the attempt. They had scarcely appeared with the cake and lemonade, when the nearest boys charged upon them, and in a moment, as if by magic, every cake had disappeared, every glass was drained. The waiters were replenished again, and again, and again, but the result was the same. The young gentlemen evidently thought that the good things of this world belonged by right to their lordly sex.

Mrs. Sylvester, in great excitement, now sent the servants with their empty salvers from the apartment, and, providing herself in the next room with one large dish piled high with cakes, determined to help the little girls herself. She innocently imagined that gentle expostulations with the boys would have some weight, — the cakes had more! In the sudden plunge of greedy, masculine hands, the contents of the dish were sent flying through the air, or emptied beneath her feet. Forcing a laugh, a piteous, serio-comic laugh, that sounded like the explosion of certain airy castles inhabited by visionary children, she disappeared, filled the

dish once more, and returned, holding it high above her head. How her arm came down, she neither saw nor knew; but it was down, in a second, and the dish cakeless in another.

Now there was a clamor for lemonade. Some gallons had been exhausted, yet the cry rose on every side, "Mrs. Sylvester, I've had no lemonade!" "I've had no lemonade!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!"

According to the general assertion nobody had tasted lemonade, though so many gallons had disappeared.

Mrs. Sylvester, almost beside herself, employed four persons to make lemonade as rapidly as eight hands could squeeze lemons and crush sugar. When a large stone jar of the beverage was full, she undertook to serve the lemonade herself, entreating that the young ladies might be helped first.

"So they ought to be. I want some for a girl!" shrieked Young America.

"And so do I!"

"And so do I!"

"And so do I, too, for a girl!" was responded on every side.

Mrs. Sylvester filled the glasses of these gallant young men very full. They were emptied in a moment, and returned for more. And now the general cry was, "This is for a girl!" "This is for a girl!" and a brimming glass followed the words.

Mrs. Sylvester involuntarily made the reflection that the girls were singularly thirsty, for they imbibed the refreshing beverage even faster than the boys. Just then she noticed some of the urchins nudging each other, their eyes sparkling with mischief, and she caught the sound of suppressed giggling. Following the course of the next glass, that she might see to what girl it was offered, she beheld a young rogue carry it a few steps, then turn his back to her, gulp down the contents, and with the last swallow cry out, "for a girl! more for a girl!"

The lemonade was exhausted, for the present, but busy hands were concocting fresh gallons.

Meanwhile it was not dark enough for the magic-lantern to be exhibited, and the young gentleman who had amiably promised to assume the duties of showman had not arrived. The lamp contained camphene, or burning fluid, of which Mrs. Sylvester had the greatest horror. But she must set aside her idle fears, the lantern was the only resource to save the garden from complete destruction. The room must be darkened with blinds and sashes, and the pictures displayed.

Tremblingly, doubtingly, nervously, and with the conviction that she was vanquished by her liliputian enemies, Mrs. Sylvester began the necessary preparations. She scanned the faces of the youths with searching eyes, and then selected three or four of the least boisterous boys, three or four who looked

as though they would not be ashamed to lay their heads upon a mother's or a sister's shoulder, and confide their griefs or aspirations, and these boys she requested to aid her. In fact she allowed them to select the glasses and conduct the exhibition, while she devoted herself to keeping the lantern steady and preventing the pressure of the crowd from upsetting that frightful lamp, a calamity momentarily threatened.

To bring benches into the room, as Mrs. Sylvester had intended, was quite out of the question. The children must stand at the sides of the apartment or sit upon the floor. The circle of light on the sheet extending from the ceiling to the ground, and the popping up of little heads, and the crowding and pressing into the centre of the room of little figures, continually mingled dark shadows with the bright colored pictures. In spite of this blemish there was much clamorous laughter and many exclamations of delight, but they failed to communicate the faintest pleasure to the ears of poor, weary Mrs. Sylvester. She was watching the lamp, and trembling all over at an ominous bubbling of the fluid, which she did not comprehend. Every moment she grew more uneasy, and after about an hour and a half of terror for her young guests, as well as herself, she suppressed a number of glasses and informed the juvenile audience that the exhibition was over.

What was to be done with the children until

supper was ready? The garden was free from invasion, for it was quite dark, and Mrs. Sylvester, when she looked out and saw there was no moon rising, felt truly thankful. The crowd was too dense within doors for games to be attempted. Mrs. Sylvester was beginning to feel that this horrible nightmare of children, weighing upon her spirit, would never come to an end, when she heard the notes of her piano. A friend, who to Mrs. Sylvester's fevered imagination seemed as though she had dropped from the clouds to her rescue, just as she was completely conquered, had struck up a dance. That was precisely what the children desired. Their little feet were ready for dancing; besides, when a dance was in question, the young gentlemen condescended to think that girls were not altogether a nuisance. They did very well for partners! Alas! how many of these hereafter will choose partners, not companions! Sets were made up in the dining room, in the entry, in the parlor, and Mrs. Sylvester, with a lightened heart, left them gayly footing it to music while she looked after supper.

She had provided, she thought, a bountiful supply of everything, but now her mind began to misgive her, and she sent domestics in haste for more ice cream, more oranges, more "pop kisses," more everything, and "as much as they could carry" was her vague and extravagant injunction.

An old family servant of color suggested that

all the doors of the supper room should be guarded, save one, that he should stand at that, and admit none but young ladies: this arrangement was triumphantly carried into effect. The boys clamored for admission in vain; "Uncle Henry" lectured them roundly, and almost fought them back. The little girls were helped in peace, and very merry and happy they looked. When "Uncle Henry" gave the order, they quietly made their exit at one door and in rushed the boys at the opposite!

But we will spare Mrs. Sylvester's feelings, should her eye ever fall upon this faithful narrative, and, as the novelists say, "draw a veil over that scene!" We really believe Mrs. Sylvester was weak enough to draw one, in the shape of a cambric handkerchief, over her face; and we know she at that moment heartily repented all the uncharitable words and thoughts of which she had been guilty towards those mothers who groaned under the weight of a too abundant supply of little ones, and she came to the melancholy conclusion that probably there was only one place in which there could not be too many children congregated, for their own perfect joy and the happiness of others, and that was — heaven!

IT MIGHT BE WORSE.

BISHOP HALL said, "For every bad there might be a worse; and when a man breaks his leg, let him be thankful it is not his neck." Into what insignificance a misfortune, we bewailed as unendurable, suddenly sinks when compared with the crushing calamity that desolates the home of a friend! The hill-fire, whose far-shining signal light warns an army of the approach of a foe, fades into a mere rush-candle when contrasted with the angry jets of liquid flame leaping from the heart of Vesuvius, and threatening incalculable destruction. Beauty is heightened or eclipsed, size magnified or diminished, color changed, sound altered, the sense of pain or pleasure intensified or deadened, by contrast.

We were once forcibly struck by the philosophy of a friend who had disciplined herself, whenever she was assailed by a crowd of tantalizing vexations, or oppressive troubles, to compare her trials with the severer affliction of some greater mourner, and to ejaculate, mentally, "It might be worse!' With that reflection came a sense of thankfulness that she had been spared a superlative evil; pa-

tience and cheerfulness ensued, and she was preserved from falling into the common, egotistical error of believing that the cross allotted to herself, was heavier than that borne by any other shoulders.

This friend was asked in what manner she first contracted the above mentioned consoling habit; in answer, she related the following anecdote:

Her early youth was rich in promised joys and present blessings; but to this hope-blossoming calm, succeeded a sudden whirlwind of trials; the loss of fortune, the treachery of trusted friends, the death-menacing illness of the nearest and dearest, her own failing health, combined with the absolute necessity of daily encountering severest toil. She had been struggling with this accumulation of sorrows for a couple of years or more. She was weary of her ceaseless exertions, dispirited, full of repining, fearful of the future, thankless for the past, and fully convinced that her fate in life was the hardest ever apportioned to mortal. She had become a total stranger to that happy philosophy which

> ——— "bids the heart whose sun is low, to borrow
> A smile upon the credit of a golden morrow."

At this period she was sojourning in a western city, to which her duties summoned her. There she constantly visited a charming family, at whose fireside Peace and Content seemed to have raised

indestructible altars. But our friend says the sphere of joyous serenity by which that home was pervaded, made her more impatient when she contrasted her own restless, wandering, unsatisfactory life with the calm existence of that dwelling's inhabitants.

The lovely children of the hostess became much attached to this frequent guest. They flew to meet her, like a flock of pigeons, whenever she came, hung around her with a fondness that soothed her aching heart, and prattled about her continually in her absence. Several times, while she was talking to these beloved little ones, she noticed, half hidden by an open door, a figure that seemed to be watching her. If she moved, to obtain a nearer view, the form invariably disappeared. Day after day her curiosity was excited by this mysterious presence. Politeness closed her lips, for it was hardly possible that the mother and children should not be aware of what she was so conscious. Indeed, several times, when she had related some hair-breadth escape encountered in her travels, a low sound, like a murmur of sympathy, or a suppressed groan, came from the direction of the concealed shape.

At length, curiosity conquered our friend's sense of courtesy, and one day she turned to her hostess and said, "You know I am lamentably superstitious, and at this very moment my imagination is almost worked up into believing that there is some

unearthly visitant near us. Do not think me very rude, though I fear I am, but, pray, do tell me who that is yonder; I can just see the waving of a white dress, and I have wondered over and over again, to whom it belonged."

The words were hardly spoken when an exclamation of pain struck upon her ear, and the slender form of a young girl, covering her face with her hands, was distinctly seen hurrying away.

A dead silence ensued. The mother looked deeply distressed, the children turned to her but did not speak.

"Poor Ellen!" at last she exclaimed, "what a pity you have noticed her! She took so much pleasure in listening to you and watching you."

"Ellen? Who is she? Is she one of the family?"

"Yes; my husband's daughter by his first marriage, a young girl of sixteen. She — she is an —" and the speaker hesitated and added in a tone of tender pity, "an invalid, one sorely afflicted."

"But will she not come into the room and be introduced, if she cares to see me? I would like to know her; do ask her to come."

"No — she cannot — she would rather not — it would not be possible to induce her," replied the lady, with an embarrassed air. An instant afterwards she turned the conversation.

At our friend's next visit, and the next, and the

next, there was no dress floating to and fro behind that door, no sound which betrayed an unseen listener. But this unknown Ellen was constantly present to her imagination. Why did she appear no more? What was the mystery attached to her? Why could she not be seen? Tormented by these interrogatories of a curious spirit, the visitor ventured to ask her hostess how Ellen was.

"About the same," she replied, gravely; "she is not likely to be any better."

"Is her disease hopeless, then?"

"Yes, perfectly so;" and she conversed on other subjects.

A few days afterward the hall door chanced to be open when our friend called, and she entered the house without ringing or knocking. As she appeared, a young girl fled along the entry and rapidly mounted the stair. Surely the step was not that of one enfeebled by a hopeless illness. The form was very fragile, but did not lack a certain elastic grace. The face was partially covered by a white bandage, leaving only the eyes and brow visible. A pair of frightened blue eyes and a low brow, over which the brown hair was carefully smoothed. Was this Ellen?

The guest told her hostess of the accidental meeting, and, taking courage, urged her to confide the nature of Ellen's affliction to one who already felt an indescribable interest in the youthful recluse. With no little reluctance the lady complied.

Owing to the death of Ellen's mother, the child was entrusted to a wet nurse. This unprincipled woman artfully concealed from the father and the physician that she was a victim to scrofula. The infant was a lovely, healthy little girl, of fine promise; but the milk by which she was nourished, diseased, poisoned her blood. Its effects culminated when she reached her fourteenth year. Just at the age when a young maiden begins to value her personal appearance, the venom imbibed in infancy developed itself in a cancer in the nose, an affection of the throat which impaired her speech, and a disease of the eyes which threatened blindness. Her sufferings were intense beyond description. She was forced to submit to the most torturing medical treatment, and after a time the disease was in a measure checked. Her sight was restored, her throat better; but the palate had been completely destroyed, and her voice had a guttural, discordant sound; her nose was partly eaten away; and the disfigurement of her whole countenance so shocking, that she was hardly recognizable. It might well make the beholder think, with a shudder, of the story of Acco, (of classic memory,) who went mad when she viewed her own hideousness in a looking-glass, and almost fear that the same fate might befall Ellen.

She lived in total seclusion; she fled from strangers, and had a mortal horror of any eye resting upon her; and if she went into the street, she was so closely veiled that she could scarcely breathe.

She heard her young sisters describing enjoyments which she could never share. She saw them grow in beauty, while her lamentable deformity increased. She was morbidly sensitive to her own condition, and keenly felt the irremediable blight that had fallen upon her whole existence.

The constant prattling of the children about their favorite guest had awakened Ellen's interest, and she so earnestly longed to see her, that, at last, with their connivance, she had stolen from her retirement, and concealed herself behind a door of the drawing-room, to hear and see unperceived.

After listening to this piteous story, our friend warmly entreated that she might be allowed to make Ellen's acquaintance, might behold and converse with her. The poor sufferer was with difficulty persuaded to grant this request, but at length she was led into the room by her tender and devoted step-mother, who placed Ellen's hand in that of the stranger.

Oh! what a terrible revealing of the possible miseries to which humanity may be exposed, was this young girl's history to that stranger!

Ellen's mercurial temperament heightened her affliction. She had quick sensibilities, ardent enthusiasm, a strong desire to love and be loved, to mingle with her fellow-beings, to shine, to enjoy, and yet life's commonest gifts to humanity, were all denied her! Still she was not wholly miserable. The seeds of piety, early inseminated

in her mind, sprang up and bore fruit which nourished her spirit, and prevented the mental starvation of utter despair.

And one happiness at last was granted her; one unhoped-for friendship became hers. She quickly formed a strong, an almost idolizing, attachment to the stranger, whose visits to the house were henceforth especially her own. When Ellen and her new friend were compelled to part, the wretched girl threw herself into that friend's arms, sobbing violently, and caught the hand lifted to dry her tears, and placed upon it a ring of gold, with a heart in the centre, saying, "Oh! look at it often. Think of me often! often! often!"

It was strange to hear that harsh, hollow voice, tremulous with emotion, and uttering such touching words, strange to see the dim, restless eyes so full of love and tears.

Think of her often! Who could have forgotten her? The whole life of the being, on whose hand that ring had been placed, was changed by her intercourse with this stricken girl. As she gazed upon the simple token, she said to herself again and again, "Ellen! Ellen! what are my sorrows, contrasted with yours? What are my sufferings, sacrifices, privations, compared to the dreary blank of your joyless existence? I will never dare to repine or rebel again! When I think of Ellen, I will always remember how much worse my trials might have been!"

Ellen's devotion to her friend strengthened even until the hour of her death, which took place some years later. They corresponded faithfully, and in her letters Ellen poured out her full heart. After the lapse of a few years, they met once more. The storms had blown over the head of one, time had soothed some of her sorrows, success had rewarded her exertions, many a wound had healed, and many a broken link of friendship had been re-united; but the unmitigated gloom that surrounded Ellen was impervious to a single ray of joy. She grew feebler and feebler, her sufferings and her disfigurement increased, until the one joyful hour when her Master bade her fling off the poor, mangled, earthly garment of her soul and stand before his presence, robed in the eternal loveliness of her pain-purified spirit.

Her memory was greenly preserved in the heart of her friend, the thought of Ellen blunted the sting of many an arrow, lifted the weight from many a burden, and taught her, with each new trouble, to reflect, "It might be worse!"

TOO GOOD A HOUSEWIFE.

WHAT a lovely looking bride was Rhoda Fielding! What a spring-like aspect she had! What an embodiment of bloom and freshness she seemed! That round, smooth face, tinted like an apple blossom, that furrowless brow, (somewhat too low and narrow, but redeemed by rich clusters of chestnut curls,) those cloudless eyes and velvety lips, theirs was the beauty of untried youth; *beauté du diable*, as it is too expressively called by the French. Then Rhoda was so artless, so frank-hearted, so unsophisticated! just what Edmund Fielding most admired in womanhood. Charmed by the glittering surface of the stream it was but natural that he never dived beneath, to note what shells, or pebbles, lay within its channel, ready to be cast up by the surging tide of matrimony. He had yearned for the first, pure, uncalculating affection of a guileless maiden, and that he had won. A man of cultivated mind and highly intellectual tastes, he expected to find in his youthful wife a plastic, genial and appreciating companion; but whether Rhoda's mental attributes,

and the precepts instilled by a very ordinary mother, had fitted her for such companionship were questions never asked. That mother had but one distinguishing characteristic, she was a thrifty and notable housewife; in all other respects the term "common-place" described her so fully that her portrait can demand no additional touches.

Rhoda was flattered by Mr. Fielding's election, she admired his tall and handsome person, she was proud of his acquirements, and the slight touch of awe with which his stately manners, and evident superiority, inspired her, only heightened her affection; for, womanlike, her heart was stirred by an irresistible impulse to look up fondly to what was higher than herself, to love what she could lean upon as stronger and cling to as worthier.

The newly married pair were starting on their wedding tour as I bade them adieu. Four years rolled on before we met again.

Rhoda was now the mistress of an imposing mansion, pleasantly located in one of our largest Northern cities. The drawing room which I entered, to await her appearance, had an air of cold luxury, rather than of habitable comfort. Costly chairs and sofas stood primly ranged against the walls, looking as though they forbade you to stir them. A few albums and show-books were laid, in a set way, upon the centre table, but no volume that appeared as though it were ever read, was visible. Though I had called at the usual visiting

hour, sometime elapsed before Rhoda ascended from the lower domestic regions, where she had been occupied by her *menäge.*

She saluted me with "I'm right glad to see you! I was so busy, but I didn't mind being interrupted by you!"

This assurance rather discomposed me, for it suggested a doubt which would not otherwise have intruded itself into my mind.

Rhoda ran on: "This housekeeping takes up so much time, you know; and I always look after things myself."

I placed in her hand a bouquet of fragrant, freshly gathered flowers.

"You're very good," she said, taking them in a half careless, half reluctant manner. There was no expression of pleasure in her tone, and her doubtful look at the floral offering communicated a secret misgiving that, had not politeness withheld her, she would have flung the odorous blossoms out of the window. She fidgeted a moment, then rose hastily, and, with considerable bustle, procured a glass of water, remarking as she inserted the stems, "I don't usually allow flowers in this room; they're such untidy things, they drop about so, and make such a litter."

As she spoke she carefully gathered up the fallen leaves of a full-blown damask rose, and threw them into the street, with an action which seemed to say, "unclean!" Her mien impressed me with a fear

that even thus, through over solicitude, she had cast the flowers of her life away, and left the bare stalk of utility unadorned by foliage of taste, or bloom of beauty. There was a working-day air about her too strongly *en evidence.* Her dress was simple and serviceable, but it lacked the tastefulness which makes simplicity charming. Her hair was neatly arranged, but becomingness evidently had not been taken into consideration. With the freshness of her countenance much of its loveliness had passed away; what remained was obscured by total disregard of accordant colors and graceful arrangement of drapery. Her olden look of frank inexperience was displaced by a careworn, fussy expression. Her buoyancy had changed to restlessness. You saw at once that she magnified the most insignificant mole hills in her path into mountains of trial, and, veritably, had become a female Don Quixote in battling with domestic windmills.

Just as she seated herself once more beside me, the loud yell of an infantine voice made her start up and exclaim "That's Jim! he has knocked his head again! he's always knocking that dreadful head of his. He'll be the death of me!" and she rushed out of the room.

By and by, she returned, dragging after her a robust little boy, whose shining face and moist hair testified to a recent hurried ablution.

"I told you Jim had knocked his head, he's al-

ways knocking his head, or cutting his fingers, or lighting papers in the fire and nearly burning himself and his little sister up! I never get a moment's peace with the two!"

"Have you no nurse then?" I asked.

"Oh, of course, I've a nurse; but I've no faith in servants, I never trust them; as to their having any idea of responsibility, it's out of the question!"

As she spoke, a neat-looking Irish girl, appeared at the door, and said, "Baby's awake, ma'am; may I take her up?"

"No, don't touch her!" answered Rhoda, almost fiercely; "I'll see to her myself. Excuse me a moment;" and off she flew again, with Master Jim making desperate plunges at her gown, and roaring lustily as he pursued her.

The interval that now elapsed seemed very long. I earnestly desired to have a pleasant chat with Rhoda, to ask her numberless questions about herself, her husband, and our mutual friends, but the object of my visit seemed likely to be frustrated. At last Rhoda reappeared with a plump, cherry-cheeked little girl in her arms. She did not exhibit "baby" with that proud maternal delight which it is always beautiful to witness, but as though she felt overwhelmed by the cares and troubles of motherhood, and quite unconscious of its joys. She told me what dreadful nights she passed with her infants, she recounted all the hor-

rors of teeth-cutting, described the numerous infantine diseases by which the young ones had been attacked (illustrating the effects of various treatment by biographical anecdotes); related what difficulties she encountered in keeping the scapegraces tidily dressed; mourned over their unreasonable proclivity to soil bibs and tear frocks, and lamented their unnatural partiality for dirty hands and daubed faces.

The history of her nursery grievances had evidently not reached its climax, when Master Jim rushed into the room bawling out, "Ma, cook says she wants more butter for the pudding, and she wants you to know the coal's nearly out!"

"Dear me! dear me! how annoying!" ejaculated Rhoda, with a face as full of distress as if she had heard of some actual calamity. "What cart loads of butter that cook uses! And what a quantity of coal she burns! I'm always talking to her about her fire! It's blazing hot, I warrant, at this blessed moment. You must excuse me a moment; I'm glad to see an old friend, you know, but household matters must be looked after; business, as the men say, business before pleasure. I'll be back in a minute."

Away she went once more, and I heard her calling to the nurse to relieve her of the baby. A loud shrieking announced when the exchange was made, and that was followed by the vigorous exercise of somewhat older lungs. Master Jim must

have again indulged in that constitutional propensity for knocking his head. Then I could distinguish Rhoda's voice pitched in a high key, it sounded very like scolding; and how shrill that voice had grown! It was positively discordant, and once we all used to think it so sweet! Another, longer interval ensued, and then Rhoda entered the room once more; panting from her exertions. She was in the act of putting her purse, pencil and tablets in her pocket.

"You see I put down everything I spend," she began, without apologizing for her absence, "and such a time as it takes me! What with the children, and the servants, and the housekeeping, I've enough to do; I get no time to myself!"

"Not even to read a little, now and then," I ventured to suggest.

"Oh, dear, no! I never get a chance to open a book. Edmund does all the reading. He complains bitterly that I don't keep up with the literature of the day; men are so unreasonable, you know; as if I had time for literature with a house, and four servants, and two children!"

"But might he not read to you in the evening?"

"That's just what he proposed, but I'm called out of the room so often, it interrupts him, and makes him nervous; and then I've so much cutting out and planning to do, besides sewing, that I can't listen. Then Edmund's always plaguing me

to go with him and hear some lecturer, or go to a concert, or somewhere or other; but it's quite out of the question, I can't spare the time. But he can't understand it; you know, men never have any thought! He says he wishes I'd hire another servant and so be able to go out with him, now and then. Isn't he unreasonable? As if I hadn't servants enough to plague me. Then, you know, men are so selfish. Would you believe it? while I'm slaving at home, he actually goes to places of amusement without me, and says he needs recreation! But the idea of tormenting me to engage another servant! Why, do you know my Kate and Martha both have 'followers,' and I had to go down yesterday evening and turn the men out of the kitchen! Of course, these 'followers' get their suppers here, and that's the reason there's always so little cold turkey left, and the hams don't last longer."

Rhoda rattled on in the same strain as long as my visit lasted; the rule and guardianship of her house and children wholly engrossed her mind, absorbed all her ideas. I talked to her of our old friends. She had not seen them, she had no time to visit. I related what had occurred to this one and that. She scarcely listened to the information. I spoke of music of which she was once so fond; her sweet singing Mr. Fielding had especially admired; she had quite given up music, she said; she never sang except to put the children to sleep. I

tried to turn the conversation to the topics of the day; Rhoda might as well have lived in Kamtchatka, for all she knew about them. I sought for subject after subject that might interest her, but with no success. Her thoughts could not wander out of the little, narrow sphere of her household, and yet only dwelt upon its vexations, not its blessings; its responsibilities, not its comforts.

Other visits brought but a repetition of the incidents of this. I saw Mr. Fielding, he looked dissatisfied, desponding, disheartened. The instant he entered the house, Rhoda invariably poured into his ears a long history of her domestic "bothers," made up of complaints about the smallness of the loaves brought by the baker; suspicions that the butcher cheated; discoveries that the cook sold the dripping; vexations at the breakage of china; followed by a minute account of the misdemeanors of the servants; the naughtiness of the children; the accidents they had met during the day; (the number of knocks received by Master Jim's head being religiously counted;) and Rhoda's own fears for their health and morals. If, after a series of patient and considerate replies, her husband ventured to introduce other topics, she charged him with want of feeling and a disregard of her troubles; or else paid no attention to what he was saying. She met his entreaties that she would walk out with him, by saying that she had shopping to do, and would go if he would promise to be very patient.

The walk only extended half a mile down Broadway, yet it consumed three hours, chiefly passed in shops.

Marriage had been a bitter disappointment to Mr. Fielding. He had looked for a companion, and found a housekeeper and nursery-maid. Rhoda could not comprehend that he needed the society of one who could sympathize with and appreciate him, and that men demand appreciation almost more than they desire affection. She believed herself very thoughtful of his well being, and honestly considered that she discharged her whole duty towards him by keeping his house in order (no matter through what scuffling and scrambling), by superintending the cooking of his meals; and being irreproachable on the linen, button, and stocking question.

As a natural sequence of his mistake, Mr. Fielding will, in time, seek his pleasures away from his home, and grow more and more independent of his wife's society. She will feel herself neglected, and join that large band of female railers who denounce matrimony, and bemoan the miserable fate of wives in general, and their own destiny in particular. And should she be asked the reason for this change in her husband's sentiments towards her, she would probably answer, with the air of an injured saint, that it was all because she was "too good a housewife!"

THE FIRST GRAY HAIR.

FEEL that I am growing old for want of somebody to tell me that I am looking as young as ever. Charming falsehood! There is a vast deal of vital air in loving words." This was the passage that Millicent Beauregard read from Landor. Her eyes wandered off the volume, and a troubled look stole over their Juno-like irids. Her delicate, white hand was pressed upon the open page, and the faintest contraction, the merest *soupçon* of a frown shadowed her ample brow. Some chord of sympathy with the writer was touched, and its vibration started a train of unwonted reflections.

"Growing old!" when was that sound musical to the ears of womanhood? Millicent could not, even by a stretch of courtesy, be called "young," nor in her "full bloom," yet we have some scruples about proclaiming the exact date of her birthday. She had long passed the season when the transient blossoms of an American woman's spring-time wither, and the briefly expanded rose leaves of her summer fall. Yet Millicent possessed so

large a store of internal freshness and buoyancy, her mental powers evinced so little decadence, — Time had dealt so leniently with her face and form, she was so wonderfully *bien conservée*, that the inevitable necessity of "growing old," and — far worse — of looking old, had not intruded itself upon her contemplation. Yet, even by the poet's measurement of existence, which says:

> "We live in deeds, not years — in thoughts, not breaths —
> In feelings, not in figures on the dial.
> We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
> Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best!"

And counting her life by its events, emotions, actions, by what she had suffered, enjoyed, endured, achieved, it had not been short; for hers was not one of those empty, passive, purposeless lives that glide on from youth to age without leaving landmarks on the road, to warn or guide others who may pass that way.

"Growing old for want of somebody to tell me that I am looking as young as ever!" wrote Landor. "Looking as young as ever!" sighed Millicent; "why that was once a familiar greeting to my ears; and Landor is right, truly: its flattery was rejuvenating. But, methinks, no one has told me, of late, that I am 'looking as young as ever.' Was it a mere chance omission, or am I" ——

She broke off abruptly, and stifled a half sigh,

that crushed, in its turn, a rising regret. What said the reflecting truth-teller yonder? She closed the book, walked up to the large mirror that stood between the windows of her chamber, and scanned her own countenance with uncompromising earnestness, resolved to detect every footprint years had left in their journey. Those cheeks, she remembered when their dimpled fulness was suffused with a soft auroral tint. Now their hue was that of a rose pressed in a book, their roundness was gone, their dimples had deteriorated into something which was a near approach to wrinkles. The eyes, they had lost their brilliancy, had sunken strangely, and what dark rings encircled them! There were lines, light but distinct, stretching across the brow, curving softly about the mouth, and more sharply around the eyes. Suddenly the vision of the furrowless countenance that glass once mirrored rose before her. The same visage, but in its girlhood, a fair, unwritten page.

It is not upon the smooth, blank scroll of storiless youth that we ever find the highest, most eloquent loveliness. As mind and heart develop and mature, feelings and thoughts chronicle their histories upon the countenance, and give new play and more varied expression to the features; lines of beauty may be read that were not visible before, a past is traced upon the face as well as a present; often a poem is inscribed there in the most touch-

ing characters with which poetry was ever recorded.

But Millicent made no such reflection, she saw what lustre her countenance had lost, not what charms it had gained; and though she was more free from vanity than handsome women in general, she had womanly weakness enough to be shocked at the sudden discovery.

Almost involuntarily she lifted the comb that fastened her hair; it fell around her in luxuriant masses of shining darkness. It had always been one of her especial beauties, praised by lovers and sung by poets; how could she help smiling to see its length, abundance, hue unchanged? She took up the comb that was lying temptingly upon the toilette, and drew it musingly through one long tress that swept over her shoulder. What glitters so brightly from out the glossy blackness? A single thread gleams whitely through the whole length of the lock, a thread of silver, yes, distinctly, unmistakably silver, a gray hair, the first gray hair! Millicent drew it out slowly, thoughtfully, shall we dare to say sadly?

Unwelcome monitor! It spoke of decay, of the wearing out and crumbling to dust of this mortal frame! But that sorrowful voice only proceeded from the unillumined depths of this lower sphere; a more melodious tone sounded higher up and told of the exchange of that perishable form for one befitting the changeless youth of eternity, and

bade her remember that death was but a grander development of life.

Millicent's existence was affluent in blessings, she was not weary of the world in which she had filled a useful, happy, and honorable place. Winding the silver thread about her finger she sank into the chair where she had sat while reading, and was soon lost in a deep reverie.

Was she indeed "growing old?" Yes, here was a gray hair, at last! Women ten, fifteen, twenty years her junior, had sighed over their whitening locks, while upon her favored head no winter had left its trace of snow, here was the first, faint track! She, too, was "growing old," then! Granted! And, after all, why should the knowledge cause her such a pang? It was only the first spasmodic shock, imparted by the recognition of the fact, which it was hard to bear.

What if age was slowly stealing upon her, had not her existence been enriched by the "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends," which Shakspeare tells us should be ours when our "May of life falls into the sere and yellow leaf." Was there not truth in the words of the philosopher who declared that a woman of really noble attributes resembles a viol which gains softness and mellowness of tone with years? Had not each year, that stole a portion of her youth away, left some more valuable gift in its place?

Was there not a vast store of precious images

garnered up in the treasury of her heart? Had she not found pleasure in pondering upon their beauty? Did she not delight in dreaming over the past, which memory always chronicled in poetry? Did she not find profit in looking back upon the steps she had taken, and in noting whither each one led, and thus in recounting to herself (haply, now and then, to others) the story of her own life?

Was it not a happiness to have watched the working out of the great ends which sprung from causes that once appeared to her so mysterious? to have seen the completed painting of pictures which she never imagined could grow out of those tints on the palette of life? to have beheld the perfected embroidery on the tapestry of existence, over which she had marvelled during its incompletion, never divining from the groundwork of inharmonious threads, what noble design could be wrought?

And, heart-warming reflection! with every year had not her sphere of love grown wider? Had not her affections radiated further out from herself? Had not her interests in others been more extended and more hopeful? Then too, had she not more ties in that better land to which many of her beloved ones had led the way, ties that linked her to that world as the loved who remained attached her to this, until she felt that she had a home in both, and dear ones awaited her there as here!

Next came the startling query, which all shall be

asked; "What use hast thou made of thy time?" Millicent pondered upon the work she had been made an instrument to accomplish; she was not content with its amount, though others might have deemed it large. She sighed over her own insufficiency, over the good she might have done which she had left undone, over precious hours wasted and golden opportunities neglected. And now she was "growing old!" "Growing old!" What then? Age ought to bring wisdom that would teach her soul larger movements, and give it more glorious fruition. There was time for nobler toil ere God measured the task. That would not be,

> Until the day's out, and the labor done!

If Millicent could have seen the expression of her own face, sublimed by holy aspiration, she would have known that there was an imperishable beauty which takes the place of the soft bloom, the brilliant tints, the smoothness and roundness which time destroys; a beauty that will clothe the spirit with eternal youth in the life to come.

Millicent still sat thoughtfully winding the long, shining hair about her finger, and smiling at the passing dread that had seized her, at the startling discovery that she might be "growing old."

"Why, what an idle bugbear," she exclaimed, "we make of years! With what silly horror we shrink from the thought of blanched locks! If they are only white records of white deeds, the 'silver

crown of age' should be deemed more beautiful than 'the golden circlet of youth.' True, Vanity cries out against gray hair, but that is simply because she is ignorant. Nature (from whom art learnt all her beautifying secrets) sent the snowy frame to soften faces which have been despoiled of their fresh coloring, and to render their losses less apparent. We have heard Landor's groan over 'growing old,' but if I mistake not, there is a more consolatory voice breathing from some healthier pages at hand."

She approached a small hanging library, filled with choice volumes, her favorite text books, selected Hillard's "Italy," and, after a rapid turning over of leaves, redolent with the fragrant memories of that "land of the sun," read aloud "growing old seems to depend much upon the temperament, and somewhat upon the will. With an active mind and warm heart all that is dark and unlovely in age may be kept off very long, if not to the end."

"To the end — ay — to the end — so shall it be!" responded Millicent, replacing the volume, while an expression of serene satisfaction played over her fine features, a look which strongly contrasted with the troubled shadow that obscured their beauty when that wail of Landor's set her musing.

CHARADES.

THE amusement of acting charades has long been popular in Europe, and is becoming more and more in vogue among young people in this country. The dialogue is sometimes improvised, but, when it is written and committed to memory, the performance is much smoother and more entertaining. Each syllable of the word, chosen to be divined, should compose the subject of one scene, and the *whole word* the subject of the closing scene.

The answer to the following charade, written for some young friends who delight in these evening games, is a word of three syllables.

ACTING CHARADE — IN FOUR SCENES.

SCENE I — (FIRST SYLLABLE.)

MADAM DISHUPLIVRE, ... *A travelling authoress.*
PENPOINT, ... *Her Secretary.*
BESSIE BLOOMING, ... *A chambermaid.*

Scene — HOTEL ON LONG ISLAND.

(Enter Bessie, ushering in Madam Dishuplivre, followed by Penpoint. Madam D. is attired in a fantastic travelling-dress. Penpoint ostentatiously carries open tablets of an extraordinary size.

Bessie. Best hotel on the Island, Marm, — every recommendation one can desire. Take a seat, *do* take a seat, Marm, and make yourself at home. Delighted to wait on you.

Madam Dishuplivre. — What intolerable forwardness! Why, the girl has quite an air of equality! But I suppose similar specimens are scattered over this American hemisphere by way of placards to show that it's a "land of liberty." Liberties enough they take, I perceive. "Best hotel on the Island?" Hotel! It's a positive profanation of the word. Oh! the horrors of travelling; that *plus triste des amusemens*, as Madame de Stäel calls it. But horrors *pay*, that's one consolation; they make one's book sell. Surely no one would have the courage to contemplate travelling in America, but for the sake of writing a book. Penpoint, write that I was strongly urged by a barmaid, in a hotel of the highest standing, to take a seat and make myself at home.

Penpoint (writing.) — Yes, Madam and would it not be well to add that she sat down first in the hope of putting you at your ease, by setting the example? A little innocent coloring, you know, is necessary to give brilliancy to the picture.

Madam D. — Excellent! Penpoint, excellent! You are an invaluable scribe. But this keen sea breeze has had quite an awakening effect upon my appetite. What have you got in the house, child, that can be quickly served up?

Bessie. — A power of good things, Marm. It's mighty fortunate the clam man's just been by, and left some whopping clams, and fine, fat eels; first-rate eels!

Madam D. — Eels? Eels? Slimy, squirming eels? I writhe at the thought! I am mentally skinned! Penpoint, write that in the first American hotels, no food can be procured but eels, twirling, writhing eels!

Penpoint (writing). — *Nothing — but — live eels — for — food.* Shall I not make some distant allusion to snakes at the same time? I hear there are plenty of garter-snakes hereabouts. I've no doubt some of the eels will prove cooked-up snakes. Shan't I add snakes? They are a decided improvement upon eels.

Madam D. — By all means. I am perfectly certain that snakes will be offered to us.

Bessie. — What rooms do you want, Marm? Missus is very flustered, helping with dinner at this hour, but I'll take your orders. You can have all the conveniences in the world here. Nothing to equal them, no, not for forty miles round!

Madam D. — Don't talk so fast, child, you stun me with your clatter. Penpoint, write that all American women speak with the rapidity of steam-locomotives. *(Penpoint writes.)*

Bessie (aside). — Speak so fast, indeed! As if a body can't speak to suit one's-self! But I suppose they've never been in these parts before, and don't

know no better. I'll excuse them. It's no use being spiteful with ignorance.

Madam D. — Let me have a private parlor immediately.

Bessie. — *Private* parlor? Well I guess our parlor's private enough for any one, any how. We haint got but one parlor, but that's respectable and *private* enough, as you calls it, I should say. It's mighty nice, I can tell you. It's got first-rate horse-hair furniture, and a picture of Washington and his family on the walls. All the folks that comes down here, goes into that parlor, for we haint got no other, so it's *private* enough for them all; just the thing to suit you, Marm.

Madam D. — What a barbarous place! Positively the child don't know what a *private parlor* means! I must sit in a public room to be stared at by the whole world! And that's the custom. I suppose the women in this country have no sense of modesty and no idea of retirement.

Penpoint. — I'll make a note of that, Marm. Shall I not add that bed-rooms are generally let to three families at once?

Madam D. — Certainly! No doubt it's the fact. What bed-rooms have you got, child?

Bessie. — First-rate bed-rooms, Marm. There's the President's room, that's our best bed-room. You see we call it the President's room, because President Tyler slept there once, his own self! I assure you he did, Marm. It was years ago, long

before he came to be President, but he got to be President afterwards; so it's the President's room all the same. I'm sure you'll feel proud of sleeping there. I heard grandmother say she remembered very well he got an awful rheumatism because the walls had cracks, and the windows are so loose, so there's no mistake about his sleeping there! You can see the self-same cracks yet, plain as daylight.

Madame D. — Here's a recommendation, to be sure! Put down every word, Penpoint. Here's interesting matter indeed! Ah! Penpoint, this country will be the death of me! I shall not survive, as that embryo president did! You will take back my last sighs to England, and bear witness that it was for her beloved sake, it was to enlighten her, that I plunged into the darkness of these caverns of ignorance, and undertook the pilgrimage through which I became a martyr!

Penpoint — (aside.) — Illuminating candles, for which the English reading public are expected to pay handsomely!

Bessie. — What odd folks! I never saw their like before! From their talk I should think they'd come out of the woods, and didn't know nothing of decent society. I'm sure *I* can't understand half they say, so they must have come from quite far in the backwoods. If you please, Marm, I'll show you the President's room; first-rate room, and you'll find this in all respects the best hotel on the Island.

Madam D. — Hotel! I'm in despair! But it must be endured for the sake of the book. Go on, child! Lead the way to your cave of Æolus!

(Exeunt omnes.)

SCENE II. — (SECOND SYLLABLE.)

(Enter Bessie with dusting-brush. She dusts the furniture very busily.)

Bessie. — Well, it's work enough I have in this house, and the old dragon that keeps it is always telling me it's good for young bones to run about! It's injurious to old ones in consequence, I suppose, since she's so fond of just doing nothing but sit still and gossip. I forgot about dusting this room, and if she finds it out, she'll have so much to say that I shall feel as choked as if all the dust in the room were in my throat.

(Enter Penpoint.)

Penpoint. — Good morning, my little Gothic Venus!

Bessie. — Good morning, sir. I don't understand no outlandish languages, sir. If you'd say all your words in English, I'd know what you meant.

Penpoint. — What ravishing simplicity! What's your name, child?

Bessie. — My name's Bessie Blooming, and I aint been a child for ever so many years.

Benpoint. — Lovely unsophistication! And what are you doing here, blooming Bessie, and Bessie Blooming?

Bessie. — I'm dusting, sir, (swinging her brush

very near him,) and a-trying to get all the troublesome things a-floating about out of the room, sir.

Penpoint. — Take care Bessie, pretty Bessie, take care of my eyes.

Bessie. — Please take care of them, your own self, sir. They're in harm's way here, sir, *(still swinging her brush.)*

Penpoint. — So they are, indeed! And when Harm carries the weapon of a dusting brush, it's dangerous, I acknowledge. The eyes are looking after you, pretty Bessie.

Bessie. — Thank them kindly, sir; but there's plenty to look after me; more than I want, anyhow. Missus is looking after me every few minutes, and Master comes plaguing me, and he says he's only looking after me, and I can't bear to be looked after. So, sir, if you please to leave me to my dusting, I'd much prefer it to being looked after.

Penpoint (aside.) — Really, the child has wit; an unexpected article in America; I'm quite charmed with her. How old did you say you were, Bessie?

Bessie. — Old enough to know better than to tell my age, sir.

Penpoint. — Ah, you have arrived at those years of discretion! You've a very pretty hand, blooming Bessie.

Bessie (curtsying). — Yes, sir I heard grandmother say so once, when she saw me box cousin Ned's ears for his sauciness. I beg you won't put my name hind part first, sir, and —

(Voice behind the scenes.) — Where's that Bessie? Where's that lazy girl?

Bessie. — Oh, law! there's Missus. She'll kick up a dust if she finds me here with you. I'll be off and leave the field to the enemy, as old Jack, the lame soldier, says.

(Exit, running, Penpoint follows.)

SCENE III. — (THIRD SYLLABLE.)

Enter Liza and Miss Haughton. Liza rustically dressed, a broad flat on her head, and a basket on her arm. Miss Haughton attired in the height of fashion, wearing a demitrain, and carrying an exceedingly small parasol.

Liza. — I'm glad you're ready at last, Miss Haughton. I've been waiting full two hours to hear that you were dressed. I didn't expect you were going to make such a dashing turn-out. All your fine clothes will be ruined in our country roads, and there'll be nobody to see you but the peacocks, who'll die with envy, perhaps. There will be a new flounce upon your trailing skirt, but it will be a mud flounce. The sun is up so high I'm afraid you'll find it a warm walk after the wild flowers you want to gather. It's grown quite late.

Miss H. — You don't call this late? I don't believe I was ever up so early in my life before. Why, it's hardly nine o'clock.

Liza. — But the sun rises at five, and the flowers are sweetest while the dew is upon them. Now I don't believe you ever saw the sun rise in your life. It's the most glorious sight in the world.

Miss H. — You're much mistaken. I've often seen it rise before I went to bed at all; but I was too sleepy to notice the especial beauty of the exhibition; one gets very tired after a ball.

Liza. — I suppose you never lived long in the country.

Miss H. — Lived there? I should die there if I made the attempt. This is the first time that I've passed four-and-twenty hours out of the city and I begin to get weary already; it's dreadfully dull.

Liza. — Then I suppose you don't know anything about the country. I wonder if you'd know a cherry-tree from a pear-tree, if they were in blossom?

Miss H. — Possibly not.

Liza. — You're not in earnest? Are you, really? You make me laugh. Wouldn't you really know a cherry-tree in bloom?

Miss H. — I presume I know as much of these unimportant distinctions as most town-bred young ladies, and quite as much as is necessary.

Liza. — Don't be provoked, Miss Haughton, but indeed it's very funny. I half-believe you're joking. Do you really know nothing at all about those beautiful trees out yonder, nothing at all? Nor about the flowers, or the lovely harvest-fields? Please, look out of that window. Tell me if you know what's growing in that field.

Miss H. — Of course I know what that is, well enough. I had my best bonnet trimmed with wheat

last year; it was all the fashion; and really the artificial wheat was very superior in appearance to the natural.

Liza. — Why, so it is wheat, to be sure. But what's that in the next field?

Miss H. — Really you amuse yourself by asking the most absurd questions; that's grass, of course.

Liza (laughing). — Grass? Grass? You call *that* grass? Don't be angry, Miss Haughton, but I really can't help laughing. To call rye *grass!* You actually don't know a field of rye when you see it! But let's set out for our walk. I fancy that I shall have the pleasure of teaching you a great many things by the way. Grass indeed! Oh, that's too funny!

(Exit, laughing, Miss Haughton follows.)

SCENE IV. — (WHOLE WORD.)

RACHEL, LINDA, ... *Orphan sisters.*

ROSA, HUBERT. . . . . *Daughter of landlady.*

Linda is lying upon a couch in a loose white wrapper, a morning-cap on her head. At the foot of the bed Rachel is sitting before a small desk, painting. She is very plainly dressed, in sombre colors.)

Linda. — Are you not weary, Rachel? You are always working, while I can only look at you and wish that prayers and blessings could lighten your toil.

Rachel. — No, dear Linda, I am seldom weary. I am fond of painting, and long habit renders constant occupation almost necessary to my com-

fort; I have no time for regrets and sinful murmurs while I am busy. And you do help me and make my labors lighter when you smile on them.

Linda. — You have sacrificed your hopes, your happiness, your prospects in life, to toil for me, and how shall I ever repay you?

Rachel. — By being contented and cheerful, by forgetting the past, by bearing your sufferings patiently, by believing that they would not be permitted by Divine Providence unless they were good for you, and by trying to be less sad; that will be ample reward for me.

Linda. — Ah, you are sad at heart, yourself, Rachel, though you conceal it so well. Sometimes, when I wake suddenly, I see the big tears stealing down your pale cheeks; and though you soon smile again when you find me watching you, I never hear you laugh now. And you had such a merry laugh once! Hubert used to call it the chime of silver bells. Dear Hubert! I wonder where he is now.

Rachel. — Linda, sister, do not talk of him. I can bear all things but the remembrance of bygone days and to hear you speak of Hubert.

Linda. — Only answer me one question, and I will never mention his name. I do not ask why you parted, but tell me if there is no hope that you will ever meet again.

Rachel. — None, not the faintest; let that suffice. The stern hand of Circumstance, the commanding

voice of Duty, parted us. If you would not make my heart bleed afresh, if you would not destroy the courage that sustains me, do not name Hubert again.

Linda. — Forgive me, I will not. What are you painting now?

Rachel. — The figure of Charity, in the garb of a nun, succoring a poor widow.

Linda. — I am afraid I shall never like any of your pictures as well as the last, in which you painted me lying upon this couch and yourself beside me, as you ever are, and the angel of Hope hovering over our heads, and pointing to the rainbow which shone through the open casement. I should like to see that picture again. Has it gone yet?

Rachel. — I sent it away last night. But I hear that my head of Jupiter has not been sold yet, and you are sadly in need of the comforts which I thought its sale would procure. Besides, our kind landlady's rent for this room is just due, and she will need the money, for she is almost as poor as we are. You look tired; try to sleep. I am working upon a critical part of the picture, and ought to give it my whole attention.

Linda. — I am tired. I will try to sleep awhile. Do wake me if you feel lonely.

(Composes herself to sleep. A short interval, during which Rachel paints industriously. Enter Rosa.)

Rosa. — Rachel! dear Rachel! ah, you are al-

ways so busy! It's so tiresome, that you've time for nothing but work, work, work!

Rachel. — Hush! Linda sleeps; do not rouse her.

Rosa. — Is she better to-day? Mother requested me to ask if she could do anything for her.

Rachel. — Has she not done enough in receiving homeless orphans, penniless strangers, beneath her roof?

Rosa. — She never thinks about that. Do stop painting for a few moments, Rachel. Your fingers are the nearest approach to perpetual motion that I ever saw. Do talk awhile; you'll find talking very refreshing, I always do.

Rachel. — If I were a poet now, I might paint with my breath; but as I am not, I must use my fingers, for I have no time to spare.

Rosa. — Did you not promise to tell me some day how you came to be poor, and why you are so sad? Tell me now; (seating herself upon a low stool at her feet,) I feel just in the mood to listen. Tell me, too, about that Hubert of whom Linda talks so often.

Rachel. — I will keep my promise, Rosa; though keeping it may give me too much pain to afford you pleasure. The story is an every-day one, and I will make it as short as possible. My father was a wealthy London merchant. My sister and I were his only children. Our mother died when we were very young. Six years ago, when Linda was just

twelve, she was attacked by a disease of the spine. At that time we lived in great splendor. When I entered society, I soon had many, so-called, admirers; my father's reputation for wealth ensured me those. I rejected suitors whose prospects were far more certain than my father's. Perhaps, Rosa, you can divine the reason?

Rosa. — Of course I can, you loved somebody else, and that somebody else was Hubert.

Rachel. — And Hubert loved me with all the devotion of which only a noble, unselfish heart is capable. He was poor, he had not yet found an advantageous opportunity of engaging in business. My father objected to our marriage, that was natural enough. Yet after a time he could not resist my supplications, and I was betrothed to Hubert. How I gloried in the thought that he would be enriched by me! But he never intended that should be the case, and diligently sought some remunerative occupation. Our days of happiness were few. My father's affairs became entangled, his health gave way, in a few months he was a bankrupt.

Rosa. — And Hubert?

Rachel. — His devotion only increased. He followed us to the humble retreat where we had hidden ourselves, he implored me to fulfil my promise and become his wife, that he might share with me the scared duty of ministering to my broken-hearted father and invalid sister. I resolutely refused. I would not fasten a burden upon his

young, untried shoulders, which must weigh him to the earth. His entreaties were all in vain. There was no hope of a brighter future for me, and I would not darken coming years to him. He begged that, for three years at least, I would consider the tie between us still binding. I would not even consent to that. We parted, I laid down love upon the altar of Duty, as thousands have done before, thousands will do again! My father's proud heart could not bear the sight of his children reduced to penury; he never recovered from the blow; in a few months we were orphans, and without the means of support. I always had a taste for painting, and fortunately it had been highly cultivated. I offered my work for sale and found purchasers who gave a trifling compensation, barely enough to supply us with bread, for the labor of many days. We were forced to reduce our expenses as much as possible. An apparent chance, as you know, made us acquainted with your kind mother, who gave us this hospitable shelter for a sum much smaller, I fear, than she can afford.

Rosa. — And you never saw, never heard from Hubert again?

Rachel. — Never! I, myself forbade him to write, and gave him no address. Four years have rolled away, he is dead, perhaps, or married, married to one who loves him, one whose face has banished the image of Rachel from his heart.

Rosa. — I will not believe that. I am sure he

could never marry another after loving you, But, Rachel, I forgot to tell you that the picture of Linda and yourself, with Hope flying over your heads, has been so much admired! I went this morning to Mr. Semple's in Regent Street to see if it was sold, and Mr. Semple said that a young gentleman who saw it declared it was the most beautiful thing he had seen for a long while! But, ah! he didn't buy it right straight off, as I think he should have done. He wanted first to know the name and address of the person who painted it. Mr. Semple would not give it without your permission, so he sent me to ask you.

Rachel. — I hope the picture may bring a fair price for Linda's sake! Besides, I feel that it is my *chef-d'œuvre.* I can do nothing better than that, my heart guided my fingers.

Rosa. — But may I give Mr. Semple your address?

Rachel. — Why should he want it?

Rosa. — Have you been dreaming all this time? Why, for the gentleman who admired the picture so much. Perhaps he wants to engage you to paint another. I promised to be back by twelve o'clock and let him know.

Rachel. — It's just twelve. Give my address, of course. I would rather remain unknown, but I must not consult my own pleasure and convenience, when daily bread for that dear one is to be earned. But I have been idling away precious moments I, must go to my Charity.

Rosa. — I wish Charity would come to you instead. But I must run and let Mr. Semple know — it is only a step — just round the corner.

(Exit.)

Rachel. — How light-hearted she seems! And once I was as joyous, but I must not think of that. I should not be what I am, unless it were the will of God, and unless it were good for me to be thus. I repeat that great truth over and over again every day, every hour, that its remembrance may give me patience and courage.

Linda (waking.) — Are you there, sister? I have had the sweetest dream. I thought I was talking to Hubert.

Rachel. — Then you have slept well?

Linda. — Very sweetly — and you have been working all the time?

Rachel. — No, indeed, I have been shamefully idle. I have been gossiping with Rosa. Here she comes again.

(Enter Rosa, running.)

Rosa. — Rachel! Rachel! dear Rachel! I have such joyful news! The gentleman has bought the picture! I saw him, and he asked me about you and Linda. He knew your names and he cried like a child, when he was looking at the picture and listening to my talk! oh, he did!

Rachel. — He knew our names, Rosa.

Rosa. — Indeed he did — right well.

Linda. — It was Hubert! I know it was Hu-

bert! Had he dark hair, Rosa, and clear, blue eyes, and was he tall and manly?

Rosa. — Yes, his hair was dark, and his eyes were blue; I noticed them as they were swimming in tears. He was very thin and very pale.

Rachel. — Can it really be he? If so, where shall I fly? I cannot see him.

Rosa. — But Rachel, he is coming here directly.

Rachel. — I cannot see him — it is impossible! Hasten, Rosa, and tell him we must not meet.

Linda. — Do not say that — let *me*, at least, see Hubert once more — it will make me quite well again.

(Enter Hubert.)

Hubert. — Rachel!

(Rachel gives him an imploring glance, and retreats from him.)

Rachel. — You should have spared me this, Hubert. If you hope to have me ever regain that serenity and peace of mind which I have lost, leave me — leave me — I implore you!

Hubert. — Rather let me never leave you more. I have happy news, Rachel. Do not refuse to look upon me when I tell you that, if your affection is unchanged, we part no more.

Rachel. — Hubert —

Hubert. — Tell me only that you have not changed.

Rachel. — Can you ask?

Hubert. — Then all is well. When I parted

from you, Rachel, I determined not to despair while health and strength were left me. Through the advice of friends I went to the East Indies. It would take me long to recount all that occurred during my sojourn there. I trust it may be the theme of many a fireside-talk. In four years I returned independent — rich. I sought you at your former home, but strange faces met me, and I could get no tidings of you. Day and night I searched for you and found no clue to your place of abode, until I saw that picture of Linda and yourself; I knew by whose hand it was painted — and — and I am here, Rachel! Here to ask you to repeat what you once promised me in happier — ah! no, *not in happier days*, for I had not then been the artisan of my own fortunes — I was not then worthy to become the protector of such a woman.

Rachel. — Hubert! Hubert! *(throwing herself in his arms).*

Rosa. — Oh! I'm so happy! And so I guess they all are!

Rachel. — I once gloried in the thought of enriching you Hubert, now I must rejoice even more in receiving all from you.

Hubert. — You do enrich me with yourself. You are a treasure no earthly wealth can equal. And, Linda, you will let me be your physician, as well as your brother?

Linda. — I thought you were never going to

speak to me. Dear Hubert, I have longed more than any one else to see you.

Rosa. — She's talked of you often enough — oftener, a great deal, than any one else — *I* can tell you that. Oh! I'm so glad! I'll burn that drawing-desk to-morrow morning. Rachel's busy fingers shall have a holiday — that they shall! I'll hide all the brushes and paints for a year.

Rachel. — But you must not forget that the happiness of this hour has been won by toil.

THE END.

(Answer to charade — *Industry.*)

SERENA.

HE is ever welcome! Welcome at all hours, welcome in all seasons! When the hour is one of darkness, her coming dissipates its heaviest shadows; when the season is one of joy, her presence increases its fulness; she brings Heaven's sunshine in the doors with her! To depict a balmy, all-pervading atmosphere, to paint a deliciously soothing aroma, would be tasks not more difficult than to define the nameless, soul-penetrating charm that hangs around Serena, as perfume about a flower. To sit beside her, to be near her, communicate an internal satisfaction wholly indescribable. It is not because she is always so cheerful, for many a gayer friend has not the same exhilarating power. Serena's influence is at once tranquillizing and enlivening. A sense of quietude, brightness, harmony, accompanies her. At the sound of her voice, the gentle pressure of her hand, the soft beaming of her face, calmness falls upon the restless, courage is infused into the disheartened, peace comes to the troubled,

discordant Ate is put to flight from the most demon-possessed household.

All reserve melts away when we converse with Serena. We confide in her involuntarily; yet she never seems curious, never desires to know more than we are disposed to impart, never, by a random question, touches upon a painful or humiliating subject, never tears open a healing wound, never hunts for the skeleton hidden in our closets. We are not fearful of wearying her by recounting the history of our vexations and disappointments, she makes them her own, for the moment, hearkening with patient interest while we pour out all our sorrows. And how many a full heart has been lightened of its oppressive burden by talking away its grievances to some mild and sympathizing listener!

We are not afraid of letting her behold our weaknesses, our errors, nay, our grave misdeeds. We are sure that she will bestow pity and spare censure. Rahel said rightly, "he alone is worthy to be called a friend to whom we dare show ourselves as we are." Serena is so lenient and so compassionate that we almost venture to believe she herself has erred as sadly as we. Thus we gain courage to rise from the mire, into which some false step has plunged us, humbly to wash our garments in tears of penitence, and dare to hope that we may stand as upright, and as purified from stain, as she.

Serena possesses a delightful faculty of conforming herself to the mood in which she finds us, even while she is changing that mood to a wiser and better. Call it tact, good nature, charitable forbearance, what you will, she never jars the mournful with her gayety, she never throws a shadow over the mirthful by her seriousness, she never scoffs at the self-created miseries with which the fretful martyrize themselves, she never excites the irritable by misplaced opposition, she never tortures the nervous by ridicule; — she comprehends all, makes allowances for all, and forbears to rebuke the unhappy state which she is softening or dispelling. Possibly, Serena's virtues are not greater than those which adorn thousands of other women, but her virtues are none latent, are ever in full activity — ever *go out of her* at the touch of a needing hand, at the sound of a supplicating voice; and truly

> "If our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not."

She magnetizes to the surface all the best qualities that slumber deep in our spirits, and renders our evil propensities quiescent without making us lose a consciousness of their existence. We never feel as though there is such large capacity for goodness within us as when we sit within her sphere. And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, we

never regard our own attributes with so much humility.

No misfortune ever assailed us which the holy alchemy of her mind could not transmute to good. She impresses us with the conviction that circumstance is but another name for the will of Heaven; that hope has been rightly interpreted by the queen-poet of the age as "belief in God," and that a cheerful acquiescence to circumstance, and a belief in God which keeps hope alive, expand the soul and bring it into a state to admit the blessings which our gracious Master dispenses according to our capacity to receive.

There are always pleasant words dropping from her lips, that strike upon the kindly strings of the heart until they vibrate with an involuntary response. But we cannot analyze the manifold little ways by which she stirs some pulse of pleasure within us, even when we are perversely resolved to sit in the gloom of thankless discontent. It is impossible to define the apparently insignificant agencies by which she produces these agreeable results; because, as Coleridge says, — "the happiness of life is made up of minute fractions; the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling."

And yet Serena is by no means one of those for-

tunate beings whose own lot can be called thoroughly happy. Though she is so placid and sunny, she has not enjoyed an existence of uninterrupted felicity. Far from it; she has known bitter disappointments — pinching privations — heart-convulsing sorrows. But they have not crushed her elastic nature; they have not soured its instinctive sweetness; and the very patience and heroism with which she has borne her burdens have fitted her to impart to others the secret of endurance. Her own anguish has taught her a tender, helpful sympathy with all sufferers, all mourners. She cannot look upon a fellow-traveller, lying prostrate upon the great human high-road, and pass by on the other side, without stopping to greet, to raise, to pour oil into the bleeding wounds. But, do not imagine that she has, even now, an ample share of worldly blessings; measured by the gauge of what contents others, her portion is poor, but of every blessing, even the smallest, she is conscious; for every one, even the most common-place, she is thankful; and thus, her humble store seems to her as sufficient and as inexhaustible as were the never-failing meal and oil to the hospitable widow of Sarepta.

Serena has not forgotten her own chastening afflictions, but she never repines, never broods over them, seldom even alludes to them. Her cheerfulness is not simply a matter of temperament; it it has been cultivated upon principle. She vali-

antly wages war against morbid melancholy; she looks upon its indulgence as a positive sin. There is a passage in "A Woman's Thoughts about Women," which we never read without calling Serena to mind. The author says, "If women did but know what comfort there is in a cheerful spirit! How the heart leaps up to meet a sunshiny face, a merry tongue, an even temper, and a heart which either naturally, or, what is better, from conscientious principle, has learned to take all things on their bright side; believing that the Giver of life, being all-perfect Love, the best offering we can make to Him is to enjoy to the full what He sends of good, and bear what He allows of evil. Like a child who, when once it thoroughly believes in its father, believes in all his dealings with it, whether it understands them or not." Even so the hearts of all who know her, leap up towards Serena.

We are acquainted with many women who take pleasure in being voluntarily useful; but Serena likes, what most people detest, *to be made use of;* to be unceremoniously looked upon as a ready helper. When there is sickness in the home of a friend, she is petitioned to watch night and day beside the couch of pain, and she never grows weary of her vigils. When there is work to be done in haste, preparations for mourning, or for festivity, her active, willing hands are, as a matter of course, called upon to aid. When there is discord in a household, she is summoned to be an umpire be-

tween the disputants. When there is sorrow, she is sent for to cheer and counsel. When there is misfortune and need, her assistance is unhesitatingly asked and promptly given, to the full extent of her narrow means. It never occurs to Serena that her willingness to serve sometimes causes her to be imposed upon; she does not account it imposition to be expected to lend all the help she is able to offer.

It is often difficult to repress a smile at the natural way in which Serena takes out her needle, thimble, and scissors, (which she always carries, accompanied by a well supplied, little pincushion, in that capacious pocket of hers,) and speeds the work of some Martha like friend whom she is casually visiting. When her hostess remonstrates, Serena says, truly, that it gives her pleasure to aid, that she finds work promotes conversation and is less wearisome than sitting with one's hands folded.

The perfect melody that pervades Serena's soul, has communicated its music to her voice, and her sweet singing lulls to sleep many a pain, and soothes many an ear, wearied by the clamor of the world. Her touching carols gush forth at our bidding as though she never thought them of sufficient value to be withheld from common use. And then that beautifully modulated voice, rich in its pathetic sweetness, liquid in its joyous clearness, is often used in reading aloud. Her rapidly varying into-

nations give a living presence to the characters, emotions, imagery portrayed, and reach the highest climax of art in making the listener forget alike reader and author, in the reality of the scene, or interest of the subject. For that reason we never tire of her reading, though we have often listened for hours without pause.

We once said to her when she was exerting herself with unremitting zeal to serve and console one who was almost a stranger, who had no claim save that of being a struggler upon life's turbulent sea, "Really you take too much trouble for——" Serena looked up with an indescribable expression in her mild, hazel eyes, — it was not a reproachful look, yet it sank deeper than any reproach — and answered gently, "I never find anything that I *can* do, *too much trouble*, it never seems to me *trouble* at all. I struck that word out of my Lexicon years ago."

We never think of thanking Serena for what she does; thanks seem out of place because they are so inadequate. We never talk to her of gratitude, nor ever utter praises; she expects neither, desires neither. On one occasion, when a heart overflowing with thankfulness poured itself out before her, we heard Serena laughingly reply, "You might as well thank the *brush*, in the hand of a noble artist, for painting a picture, instead of thanking the artist himself. I am but as a brush, a weak instrument in the divine hand, which uses you, and uses me,

according to our willingness and quality, and finds the best of us but rude brushes, unfit for the grand designs which it strives to trace out through our imperfect touches."

There is nothing in Serena's quiet demeanor which proclaims her better than others; there is none of that self-complacency which wakes antagonistic feelings; none of that conscious superiority which impels us to dispute its claims. We are sure she is never thinking of herself, and it is her thinking of others that makes us think of her. When her opinions differ from ours, she never implies, by word or look, that those she holds are indubitably right, and ours as indubitably wrong. If we gradually arrive at the conclusion that she *is* right, it is because she has such a modest, but lucid mode of conveying her convictions, that we cannot fail to recognize the heavenly halo around the brow of Truth.

We do not know whether artistic judges call Serena beautiful; but to us her face is lovely beyond all picturing. We never tire of dwelling upon the soft lights of her eyes, the changing expressions of her lips, melting one into another with eloquent transitions. It may be a foolish fancy, but she always seems to us as if she wore an unfading hearts-ease, in her white bosom, and as though that symbol, plainly visible to our sight, gave a beauty far surpassing that of rarest gems, to her attire.

O! true sister of charity, bound by unerring impulses, stronger than all vows, would that thy welcome feet might find their way into the homes of all whom we love; that thy serene countenance might leave its image in the mind of all who need to learn how much strength can be allied to tranquillity!

HE COULD NOT SAY "NO."

CONSTANTLY petitioned; invariably imposed upon; mercilessly laughed at; what a life of torment Mr. Stillwell leads! and all through his incapacity to utter that little word "no." He has tried, and given up in helpless despair; a negative always dies unspoken upon his tongue. Possibly that affirmative smile, which perpetually expands his mouth, is the great *drawback*. How can lips that are always smiling "yes" contract themselves to form "no?" The expression of Mr. Stillwell's countenance reminds us of a picture of Garrick which represents him wooed by Comedy on one side, and tragedy on the other; or of Byron's poetical simile, "a pendulum betwixt a smile and tear;" for Mr. Stillwell ever wears a look of yielding good humor conflicting with suppressed sadness.

His horror of refusing and fear of offending, have totally annihilated his power of discriminating between individuals. Everybody has, or seems to have, an entrance to his heart, his house, his purse. As a natural consequence, everybody makes use of

him; everybody ridicules him; and, because his favors are so general, nobody is grateful to him. He is reputed to enjoy a large income, yet his bachelor establishment gives no evidence of comfort, though much of waste. His home is the headquarters of his self-elected bosom friends, whose extravagance could only be kept in check by that small monosyllable of denial which Mr. Stillwell is unable to pronounce. These *attached* companions eat his dinners, drink his champagne, ride his horses, borrow his money (who would not be tempted to borrow from a man who never said "no?"), and parade the streets arm-in-arm with him, rubbing their fine broadcloth (purchased with his means), against the rusty coat he does not feel rich enough to cast aside for a better.

People never imagine that his time can be of any value, and appropriate as much of it as proves agreeable to themselves. When he is passing from one locality to another, in the greatest haste, some political, or philanthropic, or religious friend invariably seizes him by the button hole, to discuss a vexed question, and obtain his opinion. His opinion, forsooth! As if there could be a doubt of his opinion? Of course it coincides with that of the person who addresses him. The affirmative element of which his nature is composed, prevents his arguing a point, or contradicting an assertion, or disagreeing in any shape. The button-hole friend has scarcely released him, he has hardly

taken a few hurried steps onward, before he is waylaid by an advocate of the other side of the anxious question; and now he is floated upon a stream of verbiage, through all the intricate channels of the troubled waters. What can he do but yield himself up to the current? He is of this man's mind as he was of the other man's mind, and lays no claim to any mind of his own. But the blowing hot and cold to suit the temperature of his haranguers, entails serious consequences. The opposite parties meet; each claims Stillwell as an ally; both attack him; both buffet him about, and both end in denouncing him as an enemy. Thus, though he never differs with anybody, and wastes his life in fruitless efforts to conform himself to every one's views, he is always giving offence through the discovery of his inconsistency, and does not even enjoy the empty reward of popularity.

It is curious to watch how naturally people impose upon him. With what singular *clairvoyance* they discover his inability to articulate a negative. In a crowded stage coach he is instinctively selected by an overburdened mother, to hold on his knee some fractious descendant, famous for rasping shins. At the opera he is always asked if he is willing to accommodate Mrs. or Miss somebody by exchanging his choice seat for one where he can neither hear nor see. In the cars he is invariably the first person required to stand, that others may sit in comfort. At a party of pleasure he is sure to have

all the pains, through the care of the crockery and the juveniles. When he spends an evening in company he is always asked to escort a lady home, generally the least interesting person present, and the one that lives at the greatest distance. Young damsels coolly send him on all sorts of troublesome and unreasonable errands, and scarcely give him thanks in return. Why should they? He is so good-natured, they say, he never refuses to do anything, and it is so much a matter of course to call upon him! But in spite of that unvarying, stereotyped smile with which Mr. Stillwell greets these requests, we are quite sure that he is secretly conscious of the persecution he endures; he knows very well that people evince no consideration for him, but alas! never suspects that it is simply because he has no consideration for himself.

Mr. Stillwell not only suffers from the ill-treatment of his multitudinous friends, but — what is far worse — he is frequently afflicted with self-reproach, for he is often led to sanction acts which he despises, and walk in ways that he abhors, merely because he can not answer "No" to the tempter.

"More of courage is required
This one word to say,
Than to stand where shots are fired
In the battle fray!

"Use it fitly and ye'll see
Many a lot below,
May be schooled and nobly ruled,
By power to utter 'No.'"

Though Mr. Stillwell is approaching the meridian of his days, as we have said, he is yet a bachelor. Probably his horror of the dread "no," has prevented his running the risk of hearing it from lips which smiled on him. If some pitying maid or widow, should ever chance to avail herself of the privilege of leap-year, Mr. Stillwell's settled aversion to the negative may eventually secure him a partner, who, for the rest of his life, will answer "no" for him, and thus defend him against his tormentors, and lead him to the turn in that long, briery lane, through which he is so sadly journeying. That is the one hope left for him. Would he be the first man who had found his salvation through a woman?

WHO ARE THE GREAT?

TRUE greatness," says Rogers, " consists in doing what deserves to be written, and writing what deserves to be read, and in making mankind happier and better for your life." Judged by this pure standard, how few, and yet how many, are great! Few whose deeds the loud clarion of Fame has trumpeted throughout the world — many whose lives have never been chronicled save in the books of recording angels!

Not always the great, and not alone the great, are the " plenipotentiaries of the intellect," though their brows may be circled with undying laurels, and their lyres may sound from age to age. Not alone the great are they who have lashed men's passions into the strife of war, and triumphantly swayed the destinies of nations, overthrown kingdoms, or founded republics. Not alone the great are they who, in the pathless heavens, or beyond the trackless seas, have pointed out new worlds. Not alone the great are they who have wrought the miracles of science into familiar

things — wafted messages through the viewless air, or sent them beneath the fathomless ocean. These may have achieved what deserves to be written, and may have written what deserves to be read, and may have made mankind happier and better for their lives, and therefore they may have earned the title of "great." And if their greatness be genuine, the hollow-voiced applause and the undiscriminating homage of mankind are not their dearest guerdon.

But among earth's lowliest sojourners there are some as great or greater, to the unseen eyes that are always watching, always judging, always pitying or approving.

Wert thou not of that holy number, sweet, pale-faced Joan Lynn? No poet has woven into high-sounding verse the story of thy daily martyrdom; but thy toils, and privations, and uncomplaining gentleness are written in golden characters where angel eyes may read.

Yet Joan's life is but an every-day history, after all; a series of common-place pictures, unrelieved by the glow of poetic light or the stir of romantic incident.

Joan, in her fifteenth year, was the eldest of five in a motherless household. Household, forsooth! We use a large word to express the single room that sheltered five children and their father. A child herself, Joan had a wife's cares and a mother's duties. Ailing herself, she tended those

suffering little ones with untiring watchfulness. Ignorant herself, she taught those who would have had no teaching else. Wretchedly poor, she softened to them the pangs of poverty. Feeble in body, she performed the labor of the strong. With aching eyes, and over-strained limbs, and weary head, she toiled alone, from day to day. She cooked, she scrubbed, she washed, she sewed; she did all that had to be done, and she did all well.

Her attenuated little form was bowed with the weight of its premature burdens; her busy little hands were feverish from their ceaseless activity; upon her little, pinched, and sunken face want was inscribed in legible letters, with patience softly written beneath.

If she had beauty she knew it not. If she had intellect she was only conscious of the gift because it was of use, even in her slavish avocations. If comforts and enjoyments, granted to her neighbors, were denied her, she had scarcely time to think of the deprivation. She never asked why poverty, and toil, and rags were her portion, while other young maidens, tricked out in the gewgaws of the world, jostled her on the road.

She had seen children returning home from pleasant country rambles, with wild flowers in their hands, and with their baskets, or aprons, filled with bright green mosses, and other sylvan treasures. She had heard them talk of their sports

under the grand old trees in the woods ; of acorn cups, and pine cones, and ripe nuts, among the withered leaves ; of the songs of the birds ; of gambols, bare-footed, in the brook ; and she had turned her wistful, admiring eyes upon the delicate flowers, and given an involuntary sigh, as though to inhale their breath ; and she had longed to lay her hot hands on the cool, fresh moss, and wondered if she would ever ramble in a wood, or listen to the birds' singing ; and felt a thrill of pleasure as she pictured to herself the refreshing delight of resting her weary feet in the clear, cold water of the brook. But these were only passing thoughts, not unaccompanied by a faint hope ; they never degenerated into repinings.

It seemed natural that life should be the most wearisome, the most detestable burden to Joan. Yet there was a soft, inner light, a moon-like radiance beaming through those meek, hazel eyes, that said it was not so. Sit beside her, and talk to her, as she rapidly plied her needle, and thought aloud, in her sweet, ingenuous way, and you felt that it was not so. It appeared impossible that this poverty-stricken, over-tasked, half-starved child should know the pulse of pleasure, should recognize the existence of happiness ; yet to joyful emotions she was not wholly a stranger.

A very trivial incident opened a fountain of delight in her miserable home. She was sitting by the window at twilight, combing the tangled locks

of a little sister, when an open carriage slowly passed her humble door. Within reclined a fair young girl, whose seraph face seemed literally framed in her shining, golden tresses. She was arrayed in white, and her countenance was as hueless as her vesture. Her attitude bespoke unmistakable feebleness. One hand drooped over the side of the carriage, and held a sprig of rare geranium. Her lustrous eyes, which had the glance of those that look not long upon earthly things, turned for a moment on Joan. Either the motion of the horses shook the branch from her grasp, or she dropped it intentionally, impelled by Joan's wistful gaze. The little maiden saw where the green sprig fell, and darted into the street, and gathered it up, her face glowing with thanks, as she looked after the young girl, who, by some inexplicable kind of magnetism, had turned her head, and once more fixed her gentle eyes on Joan. The unearthly whiteness of the face, the pure garments, the pitying smile hovering about the pale lips, made Joan feel as if an angel had passed her way, and greeted her with this token of love, and vanished.

Very tenderly she planted the slip in an old broken bowl, and she watered, and sunned, and watched it; and in time it grew vigorously, and shot out spreading branches and finely-cut leaves; and by-and-by it put forth clusters of rose-colored flowers, shaded with more vivid auroral tints; and great was Joan's exultation.

How often she would pause in her work to bury her wan face among the leaves, and inhale their rich perfume! And then, for a moment, she seemed to herself to be walking in those woods of which the children told, and paddling in the cool brook, or sitting on the velvety moss, listening to the songs of the birds. The little geranium bush was garden, and wood, and brook and bird to her. She had that joy.

Joan found a daily pleasure, too, in the noisy, troublesome, motherless children, whose caresses soothed and comforted her. Tiny Jamie, the youngest, was always sick, but he was a quiet, patient little sufferer, and she loved him all the better because he needed so much love and care. The others were restless and boisterous, and cried often, and lustily, but she only rejoiced that they showed such strength of limbs and lungs. She sat still sewing, or knelt scrubbing, or strained her poor, weak back washing, but gambolled with them in heart, as they gambolled around her. When she taught them the little that she knew, she felt a mysterious increase of knowledge, as though she herself received unconscious teachings. When they lay in the sweet sleep of thoughtless childhood, it rested her to see them rest. So she had joys through them.

Then, too, she loved that sad-hearted, weak, sinful man whom she called "father." Her young brain was always busy planning ways to lift him

out of the temptation into which he had fallen, through the grief which seeks to drown itself in oblivion. Upon some days she was successful, and then the golden light of hope illumined, to her eyes, their squalid little room, until it shone as a palace chamber at a festival. This was her crowning joy.

At length, when Winnifred, Joan's younger sister, was old enough, and was strong enough, through the strength imparted by Joan's example, to take her place, a voice, unheard by other ears, whispered the tired maiden that she might lay her burden down; that her lowly labors were ended, and there was more joyful work for her to do up higher. Then her weary hands dropped helplessly to her side, her thin face grew ashen in its pallor, and the soft light faded slowly out of her heavy eyes.

As she lay upon the hard couch, from whence she was never more to rise, she pointed to her one treasure — her beautiful geranium bush — and it was placed by her side. It chanced at that period to be covered with the most magnificent flowers that it had ever borne. She smiled as her dim eyes rested upon them, and bright visions rose once more before her internal sight; but they were no longer of the gardens of earth! And, hovering above the roseate blossoms, she saw the face of the fair girl who had been sent to drop the only flowers that ever gladdened her path, and to flit

by nameless and unknown. The countenance was surely that of an angel. Through Joan's brief life, that face alone had helped her to conceive what angel faces might be.

Falling peacefully asleep, Joan departed—it might be to behold that lovely and familiar visage nearer still. She had accomplished her destiny and finished her work. She had written no books that would send her name down to posterity, had sung no songs which future ages would sing, had achieved nothing glorious in the realms of art, had made no marvellous discoveries, had earned no fame; but she had set a great example, which might profit others as much as literature, or artistic creations, or the wonders of science, or the deeds of the famous.

Had she not answered Rogers' definition of true greatness? Had she not done what deserves to be written? If she could have written, would it not have been what deserves to be read? Had she not made others better and happier for her life, in spite of its narrow sphere? And therefore was not the obscure child of toil one of the Great?

PRUDENTIA.

WE call her Prudentia; not that it is the name written on her brow with holy, baptismal waters, but because the word expresses her individuality. In the hereafter, when we receive new names, as we enter the great eternal land, will not those appellations typify our attributes? It is perhaps some vague, internal prefiguring of that true name-giving which impels certain minds to bestow upon their associates pet names, nick-names, names suggestive of character. And this spontaneous prompting makes us style the wise and thoughtful mother of a certain orderly little household, "Prudentia."

How is it that Prudentia, with a purse so shallow, conducts the affairs of her home department with such seeming ease and comfort? No painfully obvious "managing" is apparent. Her system entails no constant thrusting of her economy in one's face, no holding forth about the necessity of saving, and no parade of poverty, which, by the bye, is just as vulgar as the boast of riches. Parade of poverty? Yes, we use the expression advisedly; for the

proud at heart, who ape humility, the naturally mean, who would excuse their niggardliness, the designing, who would lure others into lavishness from which they may derive benefit without sharing the expense, each, from different motives, parade their poverty by the constant ejaculations of, "too poor!" "hard times!" "can't afford!" But these are words seldom syllabled by Prudentia's lips.

We have studied Prudentia, conned that fair human book in which her rules of life are written, and we think the mode by which she makes the "two ends" of that zone which girdles her resources "meet" without leaving a hiatus of debt, may possibly benefit some of her young sisters in the world's vast family. Doubtless there are a few among them who would gladly deserve the name we bestow upon her, if they only knew the art by which it could be won. It is for these alone that we throw out a few hints which may serve as a clew to Prudentia's secret.

In the first place, Prudentia, when she feels disposed to make a purchase, pauses and asks herself the important questions, "Is it actually needed?" "Can we do without it?" If the voice within replies, "It can be dispensed with," she is made aware that the article was desired to gratify taste, or promote comfort, or perhaps give pleasure, and not because it was urgently requisite. Before she relinquishes or appropriates the wished-for object

she puts another query to her inner self: "Is there nothing positively necessary which must be foregone if I permit myself this gratification?" The answer to that second inquiry always decides whether it is wise, prudent, right, to allow herself (or others, far dearer than herself,) the proposed indulgence.

She never buys anything simply because it is "so cheap!" and she "may want it sometime or other." She expects every gold, or silver, or even copper coin within her tiny purse to bring its full value in exchange. Yet she often pays high prices for articles of good quality, because she knows they will long outlast inferior materials and are cheaper in the end.

She never wastes anything, never throws anything away. Articles that have done faithful service in one form are metamorphosed by her magical touches into some new shape. The ingenuity with which these changes are wrought out excites our wonder. Unfaded bits of an old carpet grow into footstools and bedside rugs; the well-worn dress re-appears in neat aprons; stockings that had "said their prayers" are razeed down, and become quite fresh on tinier feet; chintz window curtains which, in their advanced age, cannot stand the betrayals of too strong light, resume their good looks when produced as furniture covers; scraps, and odds and ends of all kinds, serve for pretty patch-work. But we forbear to swell the list of

Prudentia's skilful transformations. After all, she is but obeying one of the great laws that rule the universe. Does not all creation wear new forms and assume new uses every hour that the world travels on its starry way? Does not the very humblest withered leaf enrich the ground upon which it falls, and nourish the new flower springing from the bosom of the earth? When Prudentia can find no further employment for articles that have undergone various transmutations in her own household, they are carefully stored away for the needy, who never knock at her door in vain.

When she has anything to accomplish which seems very desirable, but which will cause a large outlay (we mean large for her), she first sits down, and literally, in accordance with the Scripture injunction, "counts the cost" before she attempts to rear the fabric.

She is in the highest degree scrupulous in regard to debt. She makes no bill that can be reasonably avoided. When she permits herself to have an account, it is always under circumstances which actual necessity, rather than convenience, renders allowable. She keeps a memorandum of everything she spends and everything she owes. She bears each obligation incurred constantly in her mind, fixes the time and the mode of its discharge, and often cancels it before payment is solicited. She would not allow herself, or the members of her household, a luxury while a single creditor

waited his due. She is by nature liberal as the sunshine; she experiences a supreme degree of internal delight in bestowing charity — promoting the comfort or pleasure of others — especially in giving presents; but even this bountiful and beautiful impulse she controls when she owes a debt for which no provision has been made. She says to herself, "This money is not mine, it belongs to my creditor. It would be a happiness to be able to use it or to give it away, but how can I use or give that which, strictly speaking, is not my own?"

Then in her management within doors, how often her tact supplies the place of luxury! She plans her breakfasts, and dinners, and suppers with such forethought! She knows that an uncostly dish, skilfully prepared, will be as palatable as an expensive delicacy; and to ensure that the former will prove an acceptable substitute for the latter, she superintends its cooking herself. Her simple, daintily concocted "Brown Betsey," or clear, well-flavored cornina, leave no desire for rich calves' feet jelly and *blanc mange;* and her unextravagant but Italian-cooked macaroni is often preferred to the most dainty *entremets.*

Then, as regards her own dress and the dresses of her children: their exquisitely fitting clothes, of well assorted colors, though of simplest materials, are more graceful and becoming than the rustling silks and dashing satins of many a friend

wnose prospects in life are by no means as promising as her own. But we all know that taste and neatness of attire will at any time surpass richness.

Strangers look at her and exclaim: "It is perfectly wonderful how Prudentia gets on with only one servant! And her house always looks so nice; her drawing room and library are pervaded by such an atmosphere of taste! And how comfortably she lives! How prettily she and her children are always dressed! Her husband's income must be small, and yet she does not seem to be always economizing, and raking, and scraping, and managing, as some people who talk of nothing else. I wonder what her secret is?"

Her secret lies in deserving the name of Prudentia.

She is not afraid of work in any of its phases. Her own white and beautifully moulded hands lend their aid to the rough, strong ones of her servant, when such help is needed, and hands never worked more deftly and rapidly than Prudentia's. As for the toil, she looks upon it as a matter of course that all her moments are to be used, and feels it no hardship to be constantly employed. All labor is sweetened by her pleasant thoughts and the remembrance of the bright smile that will flash over a beloved countenance, and beam lustrously out from a pair of dark, loving eyes, when her husband enters his cheerful home.

> "A simple, earnest life that tireless toils,
> Is music in God's ear."

And such music ascends to heaven every day out of the harmonious movements of Prudentia's existence.

CROAKERS.

A HIGHLY proper, and pious, and thoroughly unexceptionable person is our worthy friend, Mrs. Rueful — but oh! the depressing influence of her presence! Unquestionably she must carry an invisible supply of "low spirits" bottled up and stored in her reticule! The cork is extracted by the first word she utters, and the "blue demons" escape, and complacently light down upon her neighbors' hearts, and grow heavier and heavier, where they sit, until content, and hope, and mirth, are crushed out by their incubus-like weight. Nor do the impish band take their leave when she departs; once introduced they are apt to haunt the new abode until it becomes a familiar resting-place.

Well may one dread the visitations of good Mrs. Rueful, who leaves such enemies to peace behind her! She glides into your home with tread so light that you think, perforce, upon noiseless footfalls in the chambers of sickness and sorrow. The steady gloom of her countenance reminds you of an autumn sky, when the clouds thicken and darken

with the menace of "falling weather" of incalculable duration. She takes your hand with startling gravity, sits down beside you with a sigh, looks inquiringly and compassionately into your face with misty, smileless eyes. She speaks to you in a voice soft and plaintive, that often drops into a a dolorous whisper, and gives you a sensation of vague uneasiness. Her touch sends through your veins a cold, foreboding shudder; her gaze communicates an indefinable conviction that you must be an object of pity. You may not exactly "think of your sins" when Mrs. Rueful appears, but you involuntarily think of your griefs — if you have any — and who has none?

Mrs. Rueful is a prophetic reader of faces, and she is constantly discovering some direful presage in those of her acquaintances. She groans at the sight of a countenance beaming with gayety, for she is certain it will shortly be clouded with sorrow. She dreads to hear a joyous laugh, for she knows that, in the natural course of events, it must be followed by a sob of anguish. She eschews mirth because it is the forerunner of affliction. If she sees a friend in a high state of health, she solemnly assures him that he is threatened with a fit of illness. In vain the amazed hearer declares that he never felt better in his life; she tells him that is precisely the way people feel just before they are stricken down; and finally persuades him into fancying that the rose on his

cheek is a hectic flush, his robustness the sign of alarming plethora, his vivacity the excitement of fever, and his general healthfulness a premonitory symptom of disease.

Mrs. Rueful always has a "pet sorrow" of her own; she could not live without one! She nurses this darling grief, hugs it to her heart, tricks it out with lugubrious semblances, parades it before the public eye, exaggerates it, and now and then changes it for a lesser or a greater trouble; but without an incurable woe she could not exist! Her strong-minded, matter-of-fact friends affirm that her mighty miseries resemble the sorrows of my Lord Plumcake; that a goodly share of this world's blessings has been awarded her, and that she ought to be a very grateful, contented, happy person. But Mrs. Rueful is vexed to the heart at such an assertion. How can she be happy, she inquires, in a tone of irritable reproach, when she knows that countless calamities are in store for her? when she is haunted by hydra-headed shadows of anticipated misfortune? by numberless swords suspended from hairs over her hapless head? by perpetual earthquakes rumbling ominously beneath her very feet?

Mrs. Rueful's sun is under a constant eclipse, and she fairly revels in the dark side of creation. If a friend is ill, her imagination unceremoniously lays him in his coffin; for no figure of Hope sits at the gate of her heart to open its portals to the

possibility of his recovery. And when, now and then, her prediction is verified, and a beloved one is freed from anguish, and called to joy, Mrs. Rueful makes the most of the affliction. She never bates an inch of the strictest forms of conventional mourning. She is frantic in her lamentations, and encourages the most violent demonstrations of grief in others. She recoils from the faintest approach of consolation. Her gaze is bent steadfastly downward to the grave, and the mouldering ashes that lie there; her eyes resolutely refuse to look upwards and contemplate the enfranchised spirit, rejoicing in its newly awarded felicity. The "garb of woe" is her favorite attire, a knell is the sweet music to her ears; and if she wore an ornament to correspond with her most cherished state of mind, it could only be a miniature death's head, or cross-bones, fantastically wrought. And yet she will tell you that she has made open profession of Christianity, and that she believes in Heaven! Certes, she never acts as though any of her departed friends had gone there.

The dread of accidents keeps Mrs. Rueful in a perpetual fever of anxiety or chill of terror. She never thinks of ships without shipwrecks; steamboats always conjure up an image of bursting boilers, and dismembered limbs flying through the air; railroads are synonymous with crushed heads and mangled bodies; every mode of locomotion is the medium of lurking peril, every place of rest the

abode of a concealed danger. Mrs. Rueful firmly believes that earthquakes and tornadoes will spread to every part of the world, and no being living will escape their destroying fury. When war commences, she is certain that it will extend over the whole globe, and that peace can never be restored. She is sure that lightning always strikes. She is constantly on the look-out for fatal epidemics, and beholds cholera and yellow fever taking rapid strides toward her own especial habitation. No locality is salubrious, no haven safe. Country roads, to her, are infested by imaginary snakes, phantom mad dogs, and shadowy crazed bulls; and city streets teem with risks too manifold to enumerate. Robbers dog her steps by day and shake her shutters at night. She burns her own home and the houses of her friends (in fancy) at least once per week, and determinedly buries herself and them in the ruins. To be sure, they all rise again, phœnix-like, from the ashes, but only to go periodically through the same illusory process of annihilation.

She has no faith in palmy days and prosperous times; indeed, she totally ignores prosperity. To her thinking, trade never thrives, professions mean beggary, art is at a dead stand-still, literature is, and ever will be, stagnant. The rich are on the verge of bankruptcy, the poor are daily growing poorer; everything and everybody is going to speedy destruction.

Then, Mrs. Rueful has such a propensity to dream! And she teaches others to dream; and she interprets their visions and her own, and the prognostics always bode evil. Good omens there are none; there is no "good time coming," according to her creed. It is useless to remind Mrs. Rueful that in these days of spiritual disorder, dreams are chiefly the whisperings of fantastical spirits, and that if there are any exceptions to this rule, there is no accredited, infallible, heaven-illumined expounder given to the world. Mrs. Rueful will quote Scripture to prove that dreams are of more importance than positive realities, and will give you abundant instances testifying to the dexterity of the key by which she opens those secret chambers of marvel, and drags forth their hidden skeletons.

Mrs. Rueful's faith in signs and wonders exceeds that of any ancient Roman. It is a rock upon which she leans with the complacent conviction that it can never be shaken. The spilling of salt, breaking of looking-glasses, ticking of death watches, sitting down of thirteen at table, forming of winding sheets in candles, passing under ladders, lowing of cows, moaning of dogs, etc., etc., are not trivial and accidental occurrences, but events, to her mind, pregnant with coming calamity. She is always peering into the future, always predicting, always foreseeing; and not only seeing "through a glass darkly," but beholding all the world covered with sable.

In short, Mrs. Rueful is a walking cloud, in female guise; a perambulating wet-blanket of womanhood, whose especial vocation it is to convince the world that life is but a compound of miseries, a thing made up of groans and sighs, a burden ever accumulating in weight, until it breaks the back that bears it; and that disasters and afflictions are the only rational anticipations in which humanity can safely indulge.

Is there no philanthropist who will undertake the task of reasoning with Mrs. Rueful? Will no one prove to her that if any man ever actually encountered one half the evils he dreaded, and expected, and fretted over, no man's fardel would be endurable? Will no one tell her that there is wealth, which can meet no bankruptcy, in a patient spirit? that a serene temperament is an ægis impenetrable to misfortune? that a trustful nature is a weapon in the hand of Faith to disarm Sorrow? Will no one persuade our doleful-visaged friend that there is religion in a contented heart, and gratitude in a cheerful face, and that he upon whom Heaven smiles approvingly, will reflect the brightness of that radiant token upon all the world?

THE GAME OF SCANDAL.

HAVE you ever played at "Scandal," friend? Pure must the heart be that feels no sudden pang of conscience at that bomb-like question. But the startling query, in this instance, mildly refers to a game called "*Scandal*," the delight of juveniles "too joyous to be very wise." Yet is there wisdom and warning enough in the game itself to force the conclusion that its origin was in the brain of some sage satirist, who hid a sober moral with a sportive mask.

The players sit in a row; the one at the head whispers to his neighbor a communication concerning some absent friend; the neighbor whispers the news, as he hears it, to the one next to him, who conveys the intelligence, still in a whisper, to the one nearest; thus it is imparted again and again until it reaches the end of the line. As the sentence is transmitted from mouth to mouth, it is unintentionally, unavoidably altered; the words have been incorrectly caught by the listening ear; with each repetition they undergo a change; by the time the sentence has travelled to its journey's

close it has passed through so many strange mutations that it bears not the slightest resemblance to the original phrase. Every one is requested, beginning at the last hearer, to declare what information concerning Mr. —— or Mrs. —— or Miss —— was confided to him, and lo! through these singular transitions, the harmless assertion has become a monstrous slander! This "scandal" was obviously the offspring of inadvertent, unconscious misrepresentation. As the story is traced back through all its crooked paths, the most hilarious merriment is excited by its odd metamorphoses.

The young play this game in jest, for the sake of the mirth it awakens; their seniors are playing it in sober, fatal earnest, all the world over, and like them, for the sake of mere amusement. Ay, playing it daily without self-reproach — playing it without dreaming that they are "coiners of scandal and clippers of reputation;" playing it without reflecting that their game can produce more dangerous consequences than the sport of the children!

Let us not confound these comparatively innocent scandalmongers with that venomous class whose adder-stings are aimed with malicious purpose, whose Upas breath withers the freshest flowers of Innocence with its invisible touch; whose defiled hands stir up the mud in purest streams of life; whose splenetic natures are constantly goaded by Envy and armed with the deadly weapons of Hatred. Against those, the sagest poet that the sun ever

shone upon, tells that there is no ægis that can protect even the immaculate.

> "No might, no greatness in mortality
> Can censure 'scape — back-wounding calumny
> The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong
> Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?"

Since the world has no social Perseus who can lift an invincible sword to slay those Gorgons, they are not our theme.

To them the players in the world's great game of "scandal" bear little resemblance. The latter are vivacious, courteous, agreeable, respectable members of society. If the whole truth must be spoken, we are bound to admit that these graceful babblers are chiefly of the gentler sex.

Since the world began, women must have had an especial gift of speech, for the very name of "Eve," according to Buxtorf's Hebrew Lexicon, is derived from a root which signifies "to talk;" thus her temptations to indulge in idle strictures must be greater than those of her more taciturn brother.

But the amiable newsmongers, who are playing this "game of scandal" with honied lips and smiling eyes, mean no harm. Theirs are random arrows shot in sport, yet the shaft scathes, be the hand by which it was aimed ever so white! Some charming, giddy-pated creature, with unbridled levity of tongue, gives breath to a good story (not particularly good natured), about a certain poor,

dear friend of hers; the news is whispered in the ear of the next neighbor, kind "Mrs. Clackitt," and being imperfectly heard, or not thoroughly understood, undergoes an unintentional change (as in the famous game we have cited). Mrs. Clackitt, with eager volubility, confides the secret to the first person she meets, good Mrs. Grim. Mrs. Grim chances to be of a satirical turn of mind, and the Tale assumes a sarcastic countenance; it is wafted onward until it reaches Miss Balm, a very humane and tender-hearted gossip; in her sympathetic bosom it is weighed down with such a pressure of pity, that the features of the travelling Story are smoothed into new shape. A few more steps onward, a few more pleasant touches from rosy lips and snowy hands, and the original lineaments are wholly obliterated.

But is this all? What becomes of the heroine of the game? How will she break loose from the tangled web woven by mere idle talk? Whither will she fly from the stabbing of inconsequent tongues? If her lacerated reputation ever heal, will not those wounds leave a disfiguring scar for life?

Fairest prospects have been hopelessly blighted, strongest ties of friendship dissevered, love transformed to hate, hearts broken, homes made desolate through the daily playing of this merry game of "scandal" at our firesides, in our walks, in our social gatherings. The most zealous player, having

no evil end in view, if told that he has dealt a blow to a friend, or done a neighbor a wrong, would meet the charge, indignant and aghast. Yet the game goes on bravely from day to day! We all play it, quite innocent of malice; give a buffet to the flying tale to send it onward, half expiring with laughter at the quaint, fantastic shapes it assumes.

Without presuming to don the solemn robes of the social reformer, which might float with as little grace as the usurped lion's skin in the fable, may we not venture to suggest an antidote to the bane of this popular, death-dealing game? We fear it is one almost too simple to strike; yet simplest herbs have counteracted deadliest poisons. It lies in resolutely setting our faces against crediting any injurious rumor by the reflection that the story is, in all probability, an illustration of the marvellous metamorphoses wrought by that magical game of "scandal" which we, and all the world, are merrily playing.

GRUMBLERS.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN, in one of those tales of marvel, by which he has wrought an attractive setting of fiction around a gem of truth, describes a magical mirror of diabolical invention, which distorted and rendered hideous the fairest objects it reflected. When the mirror was fractured, certain individuals gathered up the fragments and made spectacles of them, and henceforth viewed all creation through a perverted medium.

These are the malcontents of the present day. An unbroken frown keeps the gloomy glasses fixed across their brows. And the fault-finding instinct is quickened to such a degree in the wearers that they daily endure a self-imposed martyrdom. Let them walk through the smoothest, greenest, choicest paths of life, the thorns of discontent are always piercing their feet, and all the burs in the lanes are sure to cling to their garments. Let the sun shine ever so brightly, no light is received into their rayless eyes, and yet they discover and magnify all the motes in its beams. They move about with lugu-

brious countenances and ascetic speech, as though a perpetual nightmare sat upon their souls. They pour the cold water of their presence upon the faintest flame of enthusiasm that dares to betray its existence, and seem to be tortured by a frantic desire to extinguish all the Promethean fire in the world.

Southey paints a genial class of beings who are "willing to be pleased, and thankful for being pleased, without thinking it necessary that they should be able to parse their pleasure, like a lesson, or give a rule or reason why they are pleased." The grumblers, in a precisely opposite spirit, set out upon their compulsory journey through life. They start with the conviction that the universe holds nothing that is worthy to excite pleasure, and consequently form a religious determination that they will not be cheated into a pleasurable sensation.

They are especially subject to all skyey influences, and the weather is an everlasting source of discomfort to them. There is always too much rain falling, or the sky is too clear, the drought too protracted, the cold too bracing, or the heat too debilitating.

If some more contented and confiding spirit meekly points out that rain may benefit the crops, or promote the verdure of the clover fields; that the drought may be needful just at that season to dry up certain marshes and prevent disease; and mildly suggests that the Omnipotent Being, whose laws of

order have ruled the universe for so many ages, and have kept the countless stars in their orbits, yet have allowed no sparrow to fall to the ground by chance, may possibly know, in His infinite prescience, somewhat better than narrow-visioned, sense-circumscribed mortals, when it is well for the rain to descend or the sun to shine; the grumbler shakes his head; he is inaccessible to any such weak and visionary argument. He entertains the belief that he could have ordered many of these matters more judiciously and more satisfactorily for men's comfort. He is quite convinced that all the pumpkins should have grown upon oak trees, and the little acorns upon the earth.

It never occurs to him that there is even a tinge of profanity in this rebellious and egotistic spirit; for the grumbler is often a profoundly pious man. But fault-finding with his All-wise Master, and railing at his inoffensive neighbor, are no sins according to his creed. He ignores the existence of Charity's veiling cloak, and eagerly bares the suspected shoulder of a companion that he may reveal the hidden brand which affords him a sufficient pretext to

> "Abhor
> In Christ's name meekly."

Besides these Don Quixote malcontents, who are waging perpetual war with shadows and distorted realities, there exists an inferior race of grumblers,

a petty, fretful, carping set, who expend the whole strength of their intellects in quarrelling about trifles, and magnifying straws of resistance into iron bars of opposition. They are afflicted by the most subtle and intangible torments, and pass their lives in ceaseless lamentation over their hourly and irremediable trials. Their clothes can never by any persuasion be induced to fit; all the gnats in the world are in league to sting them; they never fail to stumble over the smallest stone in their way, and their waspish buzzings of discontent torture the ears of serener beings without respite.

One of the strangest phases in the lives of these grumblers, is the miraculous change often effected by a great affliction; the beneficent influence of a positive calamity. It suddenly awakens them to the sense that there is something in the world more important than their own discomfort and the shortcomings of their neighbors. They rise up from the pressure of a heavy sorrow as though strengthened by its very weight, and fling off all lesser cares as the lion shakes the dewdrops from his mane. By a single effort they arm themselves against all the minor miseries that agonized their lives, and, endure the actual affliction with marvellous patience. The irritable, contentious grumbler, who groaned at the tickling of a feather, and half-expired at the prick of a pin, bows meekly beneath the hard blow, and seems for the first time to be impressed with the conviction that the stroke was dealt by a Hand

divine. Especially "sweet are the uses of Adversity" to such temperaments, and on them the very greatest blessing we can invoke is "May a heavy, but chastening misfortune, fall quickly upon their heads!"

MRS. GRUNDY'S MISSION.

IT is a favorite theory of an eccentric speculator upon men and manners, that "all sorts of people" are needed to make up the social elements of a habitable and agreeable world; that the greater the variety of temperaments, customs and opinions, congregated upon the globe, the more likelihood there is of the arrival of that "good time" which Mackay has tunefully predicted as certainly "coming." Moreover, the moralizing individual, above mentioned, maintains that every man, woman, and child — though the man may be commonplace, the woman insignificant, the child *un enfant terrible* — has, in that same pleasant world, his or her especial "mission." We use the much ridiculed expression very reluctantly, and with a painful consciousness that it has hopelessly fallen from its high position in the English vocabulary.

Upon reflection, we are inclined seriously to agree with the philosophic theorist who puts forth the views, concerning the world's requisite occupants, which we have quoted.

The supernal powers, whose appointed office it

is to constantly influence men's actions, must require an endless variety of media to effect the good works of which they are the invisible agents. Unlike temperaments must be acted upon in a dissimilar manner, and diverse instruments must be used to carve different materials.

If the rarest diamond be unskilfully polished, the brilliancy of which it is capable will not be called forth. The full lustre of the Koh-i-noor was only revealed after the labor of weeks and the use of a horse-power of vast strength to effect its cutting. There are brilliant minds whose highest sparkle can only be developed by an equally powerful, yet fine and laborious, process.

Wordsworth has given us an illustration of a wholly opposite class in the matter-of-fact Peter Bell. Peter, into whose heart nature could never find a way, although he "roved amid her vales and streams, green woods and hollow dells," — Peter, who could not look "from nature up to nature's God," who saw in the primrose by the river's brim a yellow primrose and "nothing more," needed the shock of a dead man's ghastly face upturned to him in the clear stream, and the lesson taught by an ass's patient, loving watchfulness over his drowned master, to stir a pulse of his emotional nature, or lift his heart towards the Omnipotent who endowed that ass with its strange instinct of devotion.

Had not this poor ass a "mission" to perform for Peter? And had not Peter, after the awakening of

his spirit through this humble medium, his "mission" to discharge among his hardened comrades?

We are apt to look at the odd, inharmonious, placeless individuals that float through the great stream of existence, and irreverently wonder why they were sent to occupy space in a world which they seemed unfitted either to benefit or adorn, and where they are evidently not in the least at home. But be sure, they all have their "mission." We may laugh at them, or turn our backs on them, or dread them because they invariably render the locality which they inhabit, uncomfortable, but angel-hands are bending even these unshapely waifs into the performance of use.

Take, for instance, the much-abused, much-feared, ever-shunned, yet ubiquitous Mrs. Grundy. We admit that she is a very offensive, meddling person; that she is impertinently *clairvoyante* in discovering more of people's affairs than they know themselves; that she is a perfect Draco in crinolines for laying down cruel laws; that she creates most admired confusion by her interpretations of seemingly harmless actions; that she boldly startles young maidens with the news of their betrothal before the favored lover has spoken; that she unceremoniously lifts the cap from the smoothed locks of the unconsoled widow, and places a bridal chaplet in its place; that she frightens the miser with stories of his hoarded wealth, and confounds the prodigal entertainer with hints of his suspected poverty; that she

publishes the charily concealed privations and pinchings, and scrapings of the strugglers to "keep up appearances," and makes known all the vanity, and ingratitude and malice, envy and hatred that come within her ken, and doubles the actual amount — in short, that she is a very indecorous and troublesome individual; yet even Mrs. Grundy has an unquestionable "mission."

Many a shrew softens her shrill tones, lest they should reach Mrs. Grundy's quick ears. Many a husband puts a check upon unseemly inclinations from the fear that Mrs. Grundy should trumpet his lapses to the world. Many a youth and many a maiden, whose feet no reverence for God's commands could preserve from wandering in the "primrose path of dalliance," is frightened back into the beaten ways of safety and propriety by the dread of Mrs. Grundy's finger pointed at them — the shivering fear that seizes them at the thought of being arraigned before Mrs. Grundy's awful tribunal.

We are indebted to the continual *surveillance*, the invisible perambulations of Mrs. Grundy in our most secluded haunts, for the outside respectability of at least one-third of the community. There are consciences to which no avenues have ever been discovered, save the unseen pathway that Mrs. Grundy fearlessly treads.

Therefore are we impressed with the conviction that our theoretic friend has arrived at a wise conclusion; that it does take an incongruous medley

of characters, minds, and hearts, to make up a tolerably respectable world; that every man has his "mission;" that consequently Mrs. Grundy, with all her imperfections on her head, has been intrusted with one of the most important "missions," and that the garrulous old lady, who exerts such unbounded power in regulating the affairs of the universe, instead of being denounced and hunted out of "good society," ought to be canonized as a public benefactress.

TACTLESS PEOPLE.

WE believe it is generally admitted that the most agreeable associates, in the every-day intercourse of society, are those who put us in a good humor with ourselves. Tactless people have a wonderful faculty of effecting the very opposite. However well tuned may be the instrument they touch, their rough, inconsequent fingers always strike some jarring string. Wounded sensibility exaggerates their bluntness into insult; Confusion enters the doors where they pass in; Discord follows in their steps.

There is an anecdote told of a certain officer who, having lost an arm in battle, ever after judged of the high breeding and good nature of the persons presented to him, by noticing whether their eyes wandered to the empty coat-sleeve. He knew that those who appeared perfectly unconscious of his loss, were influenced by considerate delicacy; while those whose eyes were constantly turned to the former locality of the deficient member, had souls of a rude texture, insensible to fine perceptions or sympathetic emotions. Tactless people

belong to this last mentioned order of beings, and seem to possess an especial gift for spying out and pitilessly dragging to light, imperfections which politeness ignores.

Their scrutinizing eyes are ever upon a voyage of discovery; and who does not shrink from their merciless scanning? Who has not felt that

> "Being observed
> When observation is not sympathy,
> Is just being tortured"?

Yet from this torture we need never hope to escape while a member — especially a feminine member — of the tactless family is present. Be sure that her lynx eyes will detect the first unwelcome thread of silver that winds its shining way among raven locks, and will as certainly proclaim the unsuspected intruder. But she makes the announcement with no malicious intent; she is quite unconscious of wounding one yet unreconciled to the sore necessity of growing old. Your tactless friend seems physically unable to avoid personalities. Let a pair of smiling lips disclose pearls of strikingly unnatural whiteness and regularity, and she is immediately impelled to descant upon false teeth. She unfailingly discusses the angularity and want of grace of meagre people before those who are vainly seeking flesh in cod liver oil, and every other known promoter of rounded outlines; and she invariably expresses her disgust for unseemly

rotundity before unfortunates who are martyrizing themselves by futile efforts to reduce their unsymmetrical proportions, through compression and starvation, or to conceal them by manifold arts of the toilette.

Tactless people are especially given to criticize dress. Woe to the hapless fair one who has been forced by poverty into some little untasteful expedient, or who bears about her a darn, or a slight fracture, which she nervously hoped might escape notice. Beyond all peradventure, a pair of rebuking, tactless eyes will forthwith fasten upon the imperfection.

Beware, too, of the hands of the tactless. They are human magnets to attract and draw out defects. If a vase of flowers is turned to the wall to hide an unsightly crack, if a cushion is arranged on a sofa to conceal an unlucky rent, if a curtain is adjusted over a window to veil a broken pane, if a footstool is carefully placed over an oil stain on the carpet, their hands, as if by instinct, drag away the friendly screen, and reveal the hidden offence.

As for French gold, and plated silver, and paste diamonds, and imitation lace, dyed silks, cleaned gloves, and other genteel shams and expedients, there is not the faintest chance that they will pass current with your tactless guest. If, perforce, her lips are silent, the close investigation and the significant glances of her tell-tale eyes quickly announce that she is not duped by the imposture!

Then, if there is a sore subject to any one present, it is always stumbled upon (though with no unkind intention) by these tactless people. They will discourse about profligate sons and thankless daughters before sorrowing parents, and rail at unworthy husbands before heart-broken wives, and bemoan the wretchedness of marriage before ill-matched partners. If a girl has been jilted, they innocently endeavor to entertain her with an account of the wedding of a gay young friend. If a sick child lies gasping in its mother's arms, the consolation they offer is a history of the deaths they have known from just such illnesses. They are very much surprised if an impression slowly reaches them that they have created confusion or occasioned distress. They assure you they had no such design; and doubtless they had none. It was only the absence of that sixth sense, called "tact," which rendered them so obnoxious as companions, and which will always cause their presence to be dreaded and shunned.

Singularly enough, their own sensibilities are remarkably acute. No one can be more quickly wounded than they, if their blunt speeches are retorted, and the arrows sent back hit their own vulnerable points.

Do we estimate "tact" too highly in thinking it a positive virtue, one of the indispensable elements of an agreeable character? Was it not Dr. Johnson who said that politeness was "benevolence in

trifles"? If politeness be the offspring of good feeling evinced in social minutiæ, tact as certainly springs from the amiability which is thoughtful to spare others pain.

Many a woman, endowed with noble attributes, and rich in sterling virtues, has passed through life little beloved, little appreciated, and seldom sought after, because she was lamentably deficient in this one conciliating, harmonizing quality of tact; because she always rendered those with whom she associated discontented with themselves, and that engendered discontent with her.

A writer who has evidently weighed the importance of the social art of making one's-self acceptable to others, by rendering others pleased with themselves, jocosely advises a man who has failed in inspiring a woman with love for him, "to fill her above the brim with love for herself," assuring him that all which "runs over will be his." That counsellor understood the value of the word "tact."

ORIGINAL PEOPLE.

PUT forth an original book, an original play, an original achievement in art, an original invention of science, and what a clamorous welcome echoes throughout Vanity Fair! What grandiloquent praises are trumpeted from the lips of its graceful booth-keepers! Taking their cue from some outside oracle, what enthusiasm, what powers of appreciation, what critical acumen they display! But, usher into the presence of "Good Society," (the presiding genius of that polite mart), "an original person" — oh! that is quite different; an intolerable innovation, a social nuisance! "Good Society" is shocked that the intruder bears so little resemblance to the charming creatures whom she has stamped and moulded, and curtailed of too luxuriant physical and mental proportion. She scans the singular individual with questioning and disapproving eyes; and of what a number of crimes, according to her code, she finds him guilty! His fervid nature has melted the smooth, waxed mask of polished simulation, and revealed strongly marked lineaments, deep lines.

and uncompromising coloring. He has sought out the stature of his own soul, and found it was not just the measure of any other man's. He has burst the straight jacket of cramping conventionality, that his vigorous faculties might have free play; he has walked out of the verdureless, even-trodden path (leading to nothing) which myriads of feet are trampling with unprogressive, treadmill motion; he has rent asunder what Aurora Leigh calls "the violent bands of social figments;" he has dared to think for himself, to judge for himself, to act for himself, and not by the arbitrary law some feebler spirit has established.

Convicted of these delinquencies, "Good Society" brands him with the terrible stigma of "eccentric," "odd," "mad." And how quickly her hand-maiden, Ridicule, points at him her scornful finger, greets him with her dread laugh, and pursues him with her caustic jests. Eccentricity is such a fair subject for merriment! such an offence to good taste! such a parlor monster! Let us have none of it in these mincing, kid-glove, dancing-shoe days.

They are not at all dull, then, those stereotyped transcripts of commonplace humanity whom we encounter at every turn of this same popular Vanity Fair? They are not at all wearisome, then, those men and women led by the tinkling of custom's bell-wether; those fashion-plate patterns of one another in dress; those etiquette-book copies

of each other in manners; those living illustrations of propriety, who have been taught to move with the same motion, speak in the same tone, think the same thoughts, crowd down their souls into the same narrow actual, and shut the door against the contemplation of any high possible? Then, too, we must account them very wise in their conclusion that, although an act may be good, may be of importance to mankind, may be a deed which justice or honor dictates, yet, if it would "look singular," if it has not been done by some of their set before, oh, shocking! it is to be shunned and denounced! What pleasant, profitable companions they make, these repetition people! What great actions, and great benefits, and great examples, the world may hope for from them! They have escaped the dreadful imputation of eccentricity; is not that the *summum bonum* of a man's or woman's existence?

Shall we venture to remind them that as not a tree, not a leaf, not a flower, not a blade of grass, is fashioned by the Divine hand precisely similar to any other, so not a single human being is created without distinctive features and characteristics; and that by the attempt of those servile copyists to conceal or obliterate the wonderful spiritual and physical individuality given to each, they tacitly rebuke the infinite diversity of the Creator's works?

Shall we also dare to hint to them that as the

"eccentricities of genius" is a common expression, it may possibly suggest the inference that where there is most genius there is usually most originality of thought, consequently, originality (or eccentricity) of expression, manner, and action? Thus may we not arrive at the potential deduction that original (or eccentric) people are usually persons endowed with uncommon capacities, if not gifted with positive genius?

For ourselves, we have the bad taste to avow that contact with thoroughly original spirits is to us refreshing and enlivening in the highest degree. How their presence wakens, stirs up a sluggish, dead-alive coterie! How they infuse new ideas, new pulses, new vitality into lower, duller, more torpid organizations! How they reinvigorate the great social artery, by a process which resembles the physical practice, patent in other days, of injecting buoyant, healthy blood into the flaccid veins of the feeble and dying! These original minds force us to think, startle us into feeling, make us ashamed of our own insignificance, inspire us to search out the purposes of our being, cry "Excelsior!" in our ears, impel us onward in the path of progress; and so, we bid them all hail! We would not exchange one hour in the society of these strong and strengthening natures for a lifetime wasted, basking in the meaningless smiles, and listening to the pretty nothings

of the most charming duplicate, of the most perfect model "Good Society" ever stamped with her superlative praise of "uneccentric, unexceptionable!"

NERVOUS PEOPLE.

ERVES — weak nerves, excitable nerves, unstrung nerves, — what an absurdity they appear to granite minds and iron frames! Muscles, bones, and sinews are hard realities; but nerves have only a vapory and unsubstantial existence, in the estimation of men and women of nerve. Very paradoxical in sound, but not less veritable! You remind them that through these delicate conductors the sovereign brain transmits its will to the subject body, and they gravely admit that nerves are actually the fine, intangible media of this vital communion; but try to convince them that the disturbance of the electric current conveyed through the channel of the nerves produces that painful condition styled nervousness, and they start back to their former skeptical standpoint, and maintain that nerves are imaginary nuisances, and that nervousness is merely the fanciful, hypochondriacal state to which feeble intellects are prone. Consequently, all phases of nervousness excite in these insensate unbelievers impatience, ridicule, or anger.

A friend once remarked to us, with a sigh, "It is a terrible epoch in our lives when we first discover that we have nerves. But who treats us more tenderly on account of the sad revelation? If our hearts, lungs, brains were out of order, we should receive a fabulous amount of compassion; but only nerves — nonsense! their ailment is visionary." Yet one might as well expect to produce sweet sounds from a harp with loosened strings as to evoke the true music of life from a frame with nerves unstrung.

Mrs. Wilton starts, turns pale and trembles at a sudden sound; or is seized with such a spasm of terror at some supposed danger, that she quivers from head to foot; or is so completely overpowered by some temporary responsibility, that she wholly loses her presence of mind; or is so much agitated by finding herself in an unexpected crowd, that she cannot collect her thoughts to reply coherently to a single question. All the sympathy she receives from people whose insensibility has gifted them with a large amount of social *aplomb*, is conveyed in the half contemptuous ejaculations, "Poor thing! She is so nervous! How silly!" Not one of these stolid individuals makes the humane reflection, "How wretchedly uncomfortable she must feel!" Not one of them pityingly asks, "What great shock, or what accumulated troubles, convulsing or wearing upon her nerves, have rendered them so sensitive?"

And yet a high degree of habitual nervousness can almost always be traced to the nerve-shattering of some heavy blow, or the unnerving strain of protracted anxiety, or the exhaustion of long-continued ill health.

A train of pallid martyrs starts up at that assertion, and glides in slow procession through the halls of our memory. We sketch the portraits of one or two whose images have left a touching impression.

Kind-hearted Mrs. Meanwell, one of the most exemplary of women, is a victim to nervous *malaise;* she is perfectly conscious that her restless discomfort annoys her neighbors, and she makes the most desperate efforts to control or conceal her sufferings. Their origin is somewhat moving.

A few years ago, Mrs. Meanwell chanced to pay a visit to her husband's office. The untidy condition of his surroundings disturbed her housewifely mind. Probably she had not arrived at Fanny Fern's lamentably true conclusion that men like dirt; consequently, soap, water, and a scrubbing brush appeared to her indispensable agents for promoting Mr. Meanwell's comfort. His office was located in the lower story of a capacious building occupied by men engaged in various kinds of business. Mrs. Meanwell accidentally heard that in a remote room, in the highest story, resided the cleaners of the establishment. With the promptness and energy which always characterized her, she at once

mounted to their apartment. No answer was given to her knock. She opened the door; the room was vacant; she entered and resolved to await the arrival of its inmates. She was searching for some book which might help her to while away a tedious interval, when a man's voice roughly accosted her, and inquired what she was doing there. She was not a little startled by his rude tone; and, on turning to reply, his savage and suspicious look confused and alarmed her so much that she experienced a strong inclination to betake herself to flight. While she was stammeringly making her errand known, he commenced examining the apartment, and after hastily opening a box upon the table, seized her by the arm, exclaiming, "You are a thief! You came here to steal! You stole my sixty dollars!"

A thief! That well born, highly educated lady, whose liberal, helpful hands were always ready to aid and to give, accused of taking what was not her own? no wonder that the very suggestion struck her dumb! She could only gaze upon him in mute and terrified amazement. He repeated with greater violence his accusation, and ordered her to restore the money. As soon as utterance returned, she indignantly told him her name and the object of her presence in his apartment. Paying no regard to her statement, he coolly ordered a comrade to summon a policeman. The officer soon appeared. Mrs. Meanwell protested her in-

nocence of the charge brought against her, but her excessive alarm gave her the appearance of guilt. Instead of listening to her explanations, the officer made a jest of her attempts at self-defence, saying, "Oh! I know all about that; of course you are innocent; light-fingered ladies always are! And they are always civil spoken and finely dressed — feathers, flowers, gimcracks, and all that sort of thing. That's the way they carry on their game. But you can't come over me with any of that gammon! If you take my advice you will give up the money at once and try to make some compensation to this man to hush up the matter; you're off to the Tombs if you don't."

In vain Mrs. Meanwell told him she could not give up what she did not possess; in vain she entreated that her husband or father might be sent for; the officer refused to grant any such favor until she had been taken before the authorities. She was almost beside herself at the contemplation of her own unprotected condition, at the probability that force would be used if she declined to accompany the officer, and at the thought of the shame, and publicity to which she would be exposed. At this crisis the wife of her accuser entered the room, and, examining an old pitcher where she had hidden the money, found it undisturbed. Mrs. Meanwell waited to hear no apologies, but quickly availed herself of her regained liberty. She hardly knew how she reached her

home, and was found on the floor motionless and speechless. Her half frantic alarm, and the overpowering agitation to which she had been subjected, prostrated her *physique*, and produced the uncontrollable nervousness to which she had ever since been a martyr. Shall we laugh at sufferings which had such an unprovoked origin? Shall we pronounce them "silly," "imaginary," "weak," and turn from them with contempt?

The nervousness of Mrs. Gordon, a very lovely English lady, is even more distressing than that of Mrs. Meanwell, and was the consequence of a far more appalling mental convulsion. Mrs. Gordon had been married but a few months, when her husband preceded her to Paris to prepare a sumptuous home for the reception of his bride. A month later she left Southampton to join him at Havre. The steamer in which she embarked was wrecked, at night, during a violent storm. Many of the passengers were lost. Mrs. Gordon, with several gentlemen, escaped in a small boat. For two nights and a day they were tossed about at the mercy of the waves, without provisions, without protection from the cold, almost without hope of ultimate safety. It is not difficult to imagine the phrenzied terror of a delicately nurtured woman, suddenly thrown into a position of so much peril, surrounded by strangers of the opposite sex. On the second day a new calamity was added to those they had already encountered: the boat sprung a

leak and foundered. Only two of its occupants were saved; the young wife was one. She had not at any time lost consciousness, and remembered distinctly being dragged from the water by her long, abundant hair. She was soon restored to her agonized husband, but the states of horror and despair she had undergone had unbalanced her mind, and at first it was feared that her reason would be wholly clouded. This misfortune was warded off by the watchful, never failing tenderness and the judicious treatment of her husband.

It was several years after her fearful accident that we became acquainted with her. Her abode was one of great magnificence. Countless enjoyments were within her reach; the most soothing influences encompassed her, and a husband who made her comfort and happiness the chief object of his life, watched over her. Yet her nervousness was the most pitiable we ever witnessed. It would evince itself at the most unexpected moments in startling ways: by a deep groan, a suppressed shriek, a sudden leaping from her seat and clinging to the nearest support, by wild exclamations, and fits of terror, as though some awful scene were enacted before her eyes. She was still very beautiful, and, in spite of her nervous ailment, her manners, when composed, had a charming grace. Previous to her accident, she had been a robust girl, dowered with the English boon of immaculate health. She was not considered ex-

ceedingly sensitive, nor peculiarly timid. She had a fine and highly cultivated intellect, and more than ordinary strength of character. Could any tender nature regard the state of nerves produced by such a terrible catastrophe as a subject for ridicule? Could it excite scorn or impatience in any feeling heart?

But these are instances in which very violent causes, easily traced back to an originating source, have produced the morbid discomfort of nervousness. There are thousands of cases which, though perhaps less remarkable, appeal as forcibly to our sympathy. We have seen a woman, naturally joyous and high-spirited, thrown into a state of nervousness, bordering upon insanity, by the sight of little coffins, one after another, borne from her home, until she stood as desolate as Niobe. We have seen a strong-hearted wife gradually robbed of all control over her nerves, through protracted vigils beside the pillow of a beloved partner, over whose couch the angels of Life and Death were fiercely battling. And when, to such a sorrow, was added the presence of outer cares — the uncertainty of supplying the dear sufferer with all his needs, the dread of threatened destitution, the horror of a widow's single-handed struggle with the world, after those dying eyes had been closed for the last time by the kiss of her fond lips, — is it marvellous that the misery of life-long nervousness should be the result of such trials? We have

seen — but why multiply examples of hourly occurrence? Every one who pauses to note, will find them scattered in abundance around him. But can any kindly spirit, who is once induced to search out the causes of the grievous condition styled nervousness, ever regard its most tormenting phases as a theme for skepticism, anger, or mirth? As well might we pronounce the knell-like cough of the consumptive unreal, vexatious, or absurd!

SENSITIVE PEOPLE.

ALMOST with their earliest breath the tortures of the sensitive begin; in the very dawn of their existence, the first foreboding signs of shrinking and of suffering are apparent. The bright eye of infancy will suddenly fill with tears, the rosy lip curl and quiver, the soft cheek flush through wounded feeling. A chiding word, a mocking laugh, has pierced the tender soul; it recoils instinctively from blame or ridicule, ay, even before the child knows the meaning of the words. Who can note these touching indications of acute sensibility, without a sigh at the thought of the rude blasts, the beating rain, the pinching frosts, that must blow about, and prostrate, and wither that delicate shoot of humanity, in its upward struggle through life?

Now and then these sensitive natures are dulled and hardened by contact with the world; now and then, through severe self-discipline, they learn to resist the cruel blow; or to draw, with resolute hands, the veil of seeming indifference over the bleeding wound, and hide the throes of anguish

from the most penetrating gaze. But more frequently their sensitiveness increases, until it becomes a daily, hourly instrument of torment. It is usually coupled with an imaginative temperament, and more than half the hurts it receives are fancied, or not dealt with intention. Sensitive people are always ready to be wounded, always expecting to be wounded, always attracting casual shots their way, and often draw down unpremeditated smiting by their evident anticipation of the stroke.

Though the possessors of these highly sensitive organizations may excite our tenderest sympathy, though they may win our love, and must move our pity, yet they are not pleasant companions. Their constant distress disturbs the general serenity; their imaginary wrongs destroy all harmony, and the effort to guard them from random arrows prevents all freedom of communion. If a humorous anecdote is related, satirizing peculiarities of character which they chance to consider their own, they are certain the *raconteur* meant to be personal; if they perceive a knot of friends conversing in a low tone, they are sure the conversation is about them; if they are not treated with distinguishing attention, they fancy themselves slighted; if they receive particular consideration, they imagine that they are pitied and patronized; if an opinion of theirs is combated, they color with mortification; if they are brought forward in any conspicuous manner, they are pale with alarm; in

short, they can never agreeably make one of a social circle, and contribute to the general enjoyment by that ease and self-forgetfulness which is the charm of refined intercourse.

And yet, though their companionship is so unsatisfactory, these sensitive spirits are almost always rich in lovable attributes; their sympathies are quick, so quick, alas! that they are often wasted; their affections are ardent, so ardent that they are too readily excited and too easily betrayed; they are delicate instruments, Æolian harps, from which even a passing wind can draw forth strains of tender or mournful melody. But this lamentable sensitiveness is not the evidence of weak minds, nor of dwarfed intellects. Full-statured souls, lavishly dowered, have ever been the most vulnerable to petty arrows — arrows which, though hurled by despicable hands, have fallen with the violence of thunder-bolts upon these finely moulded and receptive natures. Sensitiveness is often the handmaiden of Genius, and gives sweetness to the world's approval, even as it imparts poison to the dispraise of fools; lending to both a fictitious value and an undue power.

It is fabled that when the bosom of the nightingale is pressed against a thorn she sings most melodiously; and often it is the poet's susceptibility to suffering, his very crisis of pain, that becomes his inspiration; his most glorious songs gush forth with the crucifixion groan; his brightest flowers

of thought are tinged with heart's blood. Even his most charming sports of fancy have been produced under the writhing of such mental agony as only sensitive spirits are capable of experiencing. We all know that Hood, the prince of humorists, convulsed the world with laughter when he was tortured by the deepest melancholy, and that Cowper's mirth-provoking John Gilpin was produced under a state of dejection that bordered on insanity. He, himself, compares the entrance of that poem into his brain, to a harlequin intruding himself into the gloomy chamber occupied by a corpse.

One sensitiveness of great minds has always been inexplicable to us: the sensitiveness to censure. Censure which pierced the heart of the philosophic Newton; which slew Racine and Keats; which drove the Italian Tasso and the English Collins mad. Alas! how could they have forgotten that only insignificance escapes condemnation; that he who outstrips others in ascending the hill of Fame, becomes the most tempting target to be shot at by every puny archer beneath.

And in these days, as in those of Keats and Collins, noble minds groan and writhe under the lash of rebuke, often lifted by unworthy hands, by Malice, by Envy, by Revenge. And the more apparent the sensitiveness of the great, the more frequently and violently they are assailed. Better far to cover Sensibility with the armor of Tact, and conquer Censure as Julius Cæsar did of old.

When Catullus satirized him, the hero disarmed the satirist by cordially inviting him to supper, as if in recognition of an act of friendship.

Possibly the pains which spring from a high degree of sensitiveness, are the meet alloy to the intense pleasures that emanate from the possession of glorious gifts, and thus Sensitiveness may be the fitting attendant of Greatness; but to lesser minds we dare venture to say, struggle against a morbid sensibility until your claims to Genius entitle you to pardon for the weaknesses of Genius.

PASSING WORDS.

A PASSING word, mere sounding breath, how light its import seems! how "big with fate" it often proves! Not alone words that are the voice of daily thoughts, but words that are only the utterance of a transient emotion, forgotten soon as felt; words that are but an idly spoken impulse melt not away with the air that holds them, but assume mysterious shapes of good or evil, to influence and haunt the hearer's life.

These passing words are seed scattered perchance by liberal, perchance by inconsequent hands; though lightly, unpremeditatedly dropped, if they fall upon receptive minds, upon open, fertile soils, they strike vigorous roots, germinate in silence and darkness, and, before we know that they are planted, bring forth grapes or thistles. Blessed are they whose paths on earth may be tracked by the good seed sown in passing words!

A passing word of truth may be likened to an ostrich egg chance-laid in sand. Warmed by the sun alone, without the help of brooding wings, untended and unwatched, the noble bird bursts, in

due season, from its shell. Even so that living truth, dropped without thought, unfostered, save by heaven's quickening heart, may rise betimes in glorious growth.

A casual word of praise has colored a whole existence; that single word, that passing breath, touching the bended bow of Destiny, has given direction to the arrow's flight, has decided the future career of the man; even as a mother's kiss of approval made Benjamin West a painter.

A word of kind encouragement has imparted to latent powers an impetus that made some shrinking soul thrill, palpitate, expand with the sense of its own undeveloped capabilities, the consciousness of what it might achieve, the prescience of what it would become.

An earnest word of guidance has woven a golden thread, strong and bright, in the web of a life.

A tender word — oh! it has fallen like manna, and nourished and revived the hungry, pining heart; it has softened sorrows no poured-out gold could soothe; it has healed wounds no Galen's skill could reach; it has lifted up prostrate heads no Titan's strength could raise; it is the talismanic pearl of all speech.

A soft word, that turns away wrath; how great is its might! It has warded off the cutting assaults of a sharp tongue, even as a polished shield causes the keenest weapon to glance aside. It has disarmed more enemies than the sword ever conquered.

A hopeful word; how potent is its holy exorcism! It has drawn down a sudden stream of sunshine into souls that were dungeons of darkness, and by that single heavenly ray, has put to flight the destroying demons of despair.

But oh! a bitter word, impulsively spoken, unremembered an hour after, has it not sunk deep into the hearer's mind, and turned the sweet waters of memory to Marah?

Terrible is the power of a passing word of anger. It has divided hearts that had been "twin as 'twere, in love inseparable;" its fiery breath has forged a flaming sword to guard the Gate of Friendship, that they who walked in the garden of old might never enter more.

> "Angry words are lightly spoken,
> Bitterest thoughts are rashly stirred,
> Brightest links of life are broken,
> By a single angry word."

A word of idle slander, of thoughtless disparagement, has irretrievably blasted a spotless name, and defiled the pure vesture of Innocence.

A contemptuous word, a word of unsympathizing rebuke, carelessly uttered, has hardened a fallen spirit, and confirmed it in obstinate evil doing.

Ever fresh in our remembrance, ever heeded and revered, be the solemn admonition:

> "Speak not harshly; much of care
> Every human heart must bear!

Enough of shadows darkly lie
Veiled within the sunniest eye.
By thy childhood's gushing tears,
By the griefs of after years,
By the anguish thou dost know,
Add not to another's woe!"

On the lips of women, at least, let us find spontaneous words of truth, hope, tenderness, praise, guidance! Kind words to their utterance should be familiar as their very breath. The oftener they speak them the more readily they will spring to their tongues, the more naturally they will drop from their lips, until their mouths resemble (at least, to the eyes of angels,) that of the pure-hearted maiden of fairy-tale memory, whose lips let fall diamonds, pearls and flowers, whenever she spoke; for Pascal says: "Kind words have been styled the flowers of existence; they make a paradise of home, however humble it may be; they are the jewelry of the heart, the gems of the domestic circle, the symbols of human life."

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS.

COUNT your blessings! "Mine are soon counted," answers a discontented voice, "I have so few — or, rather, none to count!" And that voice is the echo of how many complaining hearts!

It is startling to note how seldom people are conscious of their actual, indisputable blessings. Not that they are ignored through positive and perverse ingratitude, but partly from sheer want of reflection, partly because custom steals the value from the boon which we habitually receive. And yet, how bountifully those simple daily blessings are showered down upon the poorest, humblest, saddest of us all! And what loud lamentations we send up, to beat against the pearly gates, when the least heeded, the least prized, the very commonest, is denied!

Those who groan under the burden of multiform sorrows, are usually so absorbed in their personal afflictions, that they let the scales God placed in every human hand (to show his benefactions overweigh man's self-sprung woes) drop from their

nerveless grasp, and forget to balance the good gifts granted, against the seeming evil permitted.

Those who have no highly exciting joys, and yet no heavy griefs, often lose the sense of priceless blessings, in the stupefying movement of a monotonous existence.

Those upon whose heads the golden rays of prosperity descend in unbroken floods, who have few wishes, and no needs, ungratified, are frequently less cognizant than all others of the opulent store of benefits poured out upon them.

Yet can any of us call to mind a single being so superlatively miserable that in his saddest past, most sorrowful present, most menacing future, he can count up no blessings which demand the uncostly, quiescent, easy gratitude of mere recognition?

It is a heart-expanding practice, daily to sit down and ponder over, and sum up, the manifest blessings which have been accorded us, and which we could not unmurmuringly forego. How great will even those who cry out that they have received few, or none, find their allotted share! Try the experiment, doubter, and see if this be not so!

That which we would miss, if we did not possess, that which we would find fault if we were deprived of, that which we enjoy, even though unconsciously, justice commands us to class under the head of blessings. Instance a few of the least

rare. If the day is bright, the air is bracing, or balmy, are not those blessings? Do you not rebel when they are denied? If pleasant sleep has visited your pillow, is not that a blessing? Would you not have murmured if you had tossed on your couch all night in slumberless unrest? If you are free from mere bodily pain, is not that a blessing? Would you not complain if you suffered? If you are spared mental anguish, is not that a greater blessing? would you not make a piteous plaint if it had to be endured? If you have food and shelter for the day, and some hope of it for the morrow, are not those blessings? lacking them, would you not be wretched? If you have parents, or children, wife, husband, lover, friend, to make you rich in affection, is not love a blessing? would you not be miserably poor in spirit without? If you feel the refreshing charm of a good book, a noble poem, a delicious piece of music; if you have listened to an eloquent discourse that has made some grand truth clear to you; if you have enjoyed the society of a pure-hearted or intellectual person; if you have received a passing token of kindness from a friend, a letter from some beloved but absent one, a helpful admonition from some wise counsellor, are not those undeniable blessings, though such trivial, every-day occurrences? If you have been permitted to serve some needy brother, to comfort some suffering sister, or if you have simply accomplished the work which was set

for your hands upon that day to do, are not those higher blessings still? And yet they are but a few, a very few, of the myriad blessings which might be enumerated as so common, and so liberally dispensed, that we seldom think of giving them their true name, and, every hour of our lives, pass them by without thanks, without thought, without recognition.

Oh! then, you who would escape the sin and penalty of ingratitude to Heaven, resolve that it shall be one of the daily duties of your life, one of its indispensable employments, to seek out and sum up each day's blessings, and grave them ineffaceably upon your memory. The very habit will multiply their number, will increase their value, will wake some grateful pulse in the most thankless heart, and draw down some ray of light through the darkest gloom that can encompass the most troubled spirit.

SPARE MOMENTS.

"SPARE moments are the gold-dust of time!" Like a chime of silver bells those words ring in our ears as we hover about thee, gentle-hearted Mabel, — violet that perfumes all the house! — and watch thee, and marvel at thee, day after day. Marvel at the spirit of accomplishing that seems thy helpful, yet unobtrusive attendant; at the soundless motions of that invisible but inseparable companion, as she walks by thy side, and lends her cunning to thy hands, and infuses her spirit of achieving into thy brain.

Our Mabel is never fussy, never bustling, never hurried. She never flies, with a whirlwind rush, from occupation to occupation, and creates a tornado-like atmosphere around her. She never goes pantingly about, her quickened breath and hastened step giving the impression that she is driven by the whip of some pursuing, inexorable Duty. In short, she never seems oppressively busy. You never hear from her pleasant lips the ejaculation, "so much to do!" as an excuse for neglecting this or that matter which ought to have received

attention; or as a reason for refusing a service to a friend; or for declining to aid in some project for the general advantage; or for joining in some harmless amusement; or for allowing herself what she styles "indulgence work" — work for the gratification of taste, belonging rather to the school of fancy than of use. Yet Mabel achieves more than anybody else in her home circle. She plans more, begins more; plenty of us plan and begin, but most of us linger on that threshold, while she finishes, and passes quietly on to new tasks.

Mabel seldom talks of what she means to do, or what she has done. She does not flauntingly thrust her superior industry in the faces of her associates, who, if not positively indolent, yet lack her wonderful faculty of accomplishing. She does not, in the faintest degree, resemble those excitably energetic individuals who are always crying out to their neighbors, (if not in words, quite as audibly by their deeds,) "How idle and useless you are, and how busy and valuable I am! Why do you not take pattern of me?"

Indeed, Mabel would be quite startled if any one suggested, in her presence, that she was a model for others. She is wholly unconscious that her delicate feet are making "footprints in the sands of time," into which other feet may profitably tread.

Occupation does not seem to weary her any

more than the lustrous stars are wearied by moving regularly and harmoniously in their appointed cycles; while the *dolce far niente* of the Italians would be more fatiguing to her than the most uninviting labor.

But it was not this circumstance, strange as the fact appears, which excited our admiration and wonder. The puzzling question is, how comes it that her work always brings forth a richer fruition than the industry of others? To all appearance, she moves less quickly than some of her companions. Certes, her needle does not fly faster, nor her pen run more fleetly, nor her eyes speed over the pages of a book more rapidly than theirs. Nor are her feet swifter, nor have her hands a more quicksilver motion. Still, when scanning eyes take a silent account of what has been achieved each day, it is always placid, unpretentious Mabel who can show the largest positive results. How and why is this?

For a space that question remained unanswered in our mind. But, watching our sweet Mabel as she glided noiselessly through her day, we plucked the secret out of this mystery. It lay in Mabel's use of her "spare moments," little "odds and ends" of time, intervals between anticipated events, pauses which people generally allow to slip by unfilled, while they are waiting for what is about to happen; the summons to a meal not punctually served; the arrival of a belated friend; the com-

ing of a dilatory carriage; the opening of the mail; the cessation of unwelcome rain; or a hundred similar daily occurrences. It is Mabel's thorough appreciation of the value of time, and the economical employment of these usually neglected, uncounted moments, which enable her thus to surpass others in undertaking largely, and accomplishing proportionately; and have revealed to us the full interpretation of that poetically expressed but practical truth, "Spare moments are the gold-dust of time."

OUR LOTS IN LIFE.

IF I had only been born in some other position! If I had the advantages that my friend —— has! If I had been endowed with such talents as so and so possesses! If I had enjoyed as uninterrupted prosperity as such and such a one! If I had been allowed as much leisure as this or that person! If I were not tormented by so many petty vexations! If I had not been bowed down by such heavy trials, ah! then, indeed, I might have been a very different being from what I am! Then I should have been full of hope and spirit, full of patience and thankfulness; then I should have accomplished great ends in life; then I should have filled a worthy place in the world; yes, then I should have been quite contented!" Is not that the daily complaint of thousands, sometimes loudly spoken, often unuttered, though deeply felt?

To murmur against our lots in life, as though they had been distributed by some blind chance, is the very commonest of the darling sins which we hug to our thankless hearts; the favorite de-

fence of our indolence and wilfulness, our slow steps in the path of progress, our casting down of appointed fardels on the road, crying out that they are greater than we can bear. And yet, while we are sending up this heaven-upbraiding wail, how startled and shocked we would be at the assertion that we had no faith in the existence of a Supreme Being. But if we do really believe in that All-potent Ruler, can we imagine that the destinies of those creatures he fashioned to be recipients of his bounty (a "God of Love" could not have created them for any other purpose), are mere accidents, independent of his will and providence, though subject to his cognizance? He who, in his inmost soul, believes in chance, believes not in God at all.

However unequal, and apparently unjust, may seem the distribution of worldly gifts, of talents, of success, of happiness, if there be truth in the assertion that a sparrow falls not to the ground without the knowledge of our Heavenly Father, that the very hairs of our head are numbered, an immutable law of wisdom must rule over the most insignificant, as over the most important events of our lives. That law, through all its mysterious workings, can only have for its end the promotion of our eternal happiness. How, then, shall we escape the conviction that every one, during this, his probationary life, is allowed just the amount of success and prosperity, is subjected to just the

degree of trial and temptation, is placed in precisely the situation, which will develop his true character, bring out his evils through exciting causes, that he may become aware of and conquer them, and call forth his noble attributes, that they may be perfected by use; and thus that he may be fitted to enjoy the highest possible felicity here and hereafter?

Different organizations need to pass through different ordeals, that the dross may be separated from the gold.

How often a temper that was very sweet and lovable, during years of smooth prosperity, when it encounters unexpected opposition, or is perplexed by harassing cares, will evince an irritability and bitterness of which it seemed incapable! But if it learn to resist the influences by which its amiability was disturbed, its sweetness returns, is redoubled, and lastingly confirmed.

How often a disposition appears very lavish of benefactions until the generous impulse is suddenly checked by the necessity of undergoing personal privation, in order to give! But if, in time, joy in bestowing is re-awakened, despite of self-sacrifice, then generosity becomes real and rock-founded.

How often a heart that is soft and loving while other hearts beat in unison with its own, while tenderness and appreciation keep its pulses warm, when exposed to neglect, misrepresentation, cold-

ness, grows hard and frigid! But unless the ice melt again, and the tender affections, even in a chilling atmosphere, regain their ascendency, the apparent love and gentleness of that nature was spurious.

Not a trial is sent but as a regenerating and perfecting agent. From the death-like stroke of affliction, from the deep humiliation which covers us with sackcloth and ashes, from the misfortunes that strip us of all, the spirit that can be purified rises stronger and gladder, with upward-looking eyes and chastened heart.

Those terrible bereavements, the snapping of those holy links that convulse our spirits and cast us prostrate on the earth, in despair, are only permitted to give birth, through this agonizing travail, to some new and holier state; to produce some great calm growing out of the mind's tempest, when the voice of the Lord has spoken to the raging waters and the wild winds of the soul, and said, "Peace! Be still!"

But all these heavenly ends are frustrated if we destroy the possibilities of happiness implanted within us, by idle repining; if we cast away the mental and physical instruments apportioned for our use, saying, "They are blunted, they are not as noble as another man's, they are unmeet for us;" in short, if we murmur at our lots in life.

However exposed or barren, however lowly or obscure, is the corner allotted to us in our Lord's

vineyard, we should not have been placed exactly in that locality, unless it were the fittest spot for our toil and advancement. We must not rebel because another seems more fortunately situated, or better prepared to bring the ground he tills to fruition; we must not complain because those who have not borne with us the heat and labor of the day, receive wages as large as ours. Unless just such work were needed for our development, it would not be placed beneath our hands; unless just such toil were required for theirs, it would not be entrusted to them. Do the work, and leave the sequel to God! When the servants who have been faithful over little, or over much, receive their rewards, the mystery of our seemingly unequal lots will assuredly be revealed to us.

RESPONSIBILITY.

AM afraid to undertake it; the responsibility is too great. I never incur a responsibility that can be avoided!" Such was the hesitating reply of one whom the popular voice pronounced kind of heart and blameless of life, when a friend suggested to her a charitable action not easy of accomplishment. The deed was one which necessarily would have entailed some trouble, demanded some exertion, and have been attended with some annoyance if its result proved unfortunate. But if a happy fruition crowned her efforts, her whole existence must have been pervaded with a sense of internal and lasting satisfaction, as the chosen instrument for such a noble work; one record would have been written upon her book of life, which could have conjured up consoling thoughts in her hour of bitterest sorrow; one memory would have been hers, that might have shed celestial light even upon her death-bed. And yet the dread of responsibility could make her shrink and turn aside, and try to forget that she might have lifted the burden from

bowed and aching hearts, yet did not touch it with a finger!

"Never incur a responsibility that can be avoided!" What a selfish, heartless declaration! What a shallow resolution! Cold and narrow and of fossil hardness is the life of those who keep their palms clean, not of evil and its consequences, but of responsibility and its risks. Such beings take but the one talent from the hand of their Lord, which is bounteously opened to bestow ten, because, forsooth, the ten would involve greater responsibility. Nay, they hide even that one in the earth, to escape the poor responsibility of putting it out to usury.

Truly, with what measure we mete it shall be measured to us; good measure, shaken together, pressed down and running over, if such we give; but we have no power to bestow without incurring responsibility. The bountiful measure of good gifts, present and future, is for those who, nothing doubting, assume great and holy responsibilities, and discharge them with steadfast confidence. True, the more responsibilities we are content to accept, the larger the number that will flow in upon us, as though they were endowed with a self-increasing principle; but each one faithfully discharged brings its compensating joy, and if the responsibilities sometimes seem endless, the happiness they purchase will also prove inexhaustible.

Blessed are those hands to whom much is con-

fided, and who receive the charge undismayed. Heaven-blessed! for their work is a daily laying up of treasure above. The prudent man, the timid skeptic, the thoughtless worldling, will accuse them of rashness, perchance will utter lamentations over their insanity; what matter? Conviction and experience quickly teach these large-hearted, fearless laborers that new power is imparted with every fresh burden trustingly accepted; for there is a mysterious strength born of perfect trust, incomprehensible to those who never trusted unreservedly.

Landor says, "We should bring out of every man and every creature as much utility as we may." Happy are they who apply the injunction to themselves, and, seeking to develop their own utmost utility, never evade a responsibility.

Shrink not from responsibility, oh, young maiden, just entering, with faltering feet and unworn heart, upon the slippery paths of life! Tread firmly, and stretch out thine arms to receive it with loving embrace! The very willingness to accept the burden will prevent its weight from bowing you earthward. But, with that willingness, be not "infirm of purpose," a gleaner only in the fields of imagination. Let your resolves go forth into positive acts. Heed the poet's warning, not to make of good intentions a Jacob's ladder, upon which your wishes mount to the skies, whilst you lie slumbering beneath:

"Alas! we make
A ladder of our thoughts, where angels step,
But sleep ourselves at the foot; our high resolves
Look down upon our slumbering acts."

The responsibilities assumed will oppress and grieve you sometimes, that is inevitable; they will not less surely gladden your heart in its hour of heaviness by the remembrance that you have gladdened others, that you have achieved something in your day, that you have fulfilled your part in the great scheme divine, which allots to every created being a separate share of labor, of responsibility, of rest, of reward.

THE UNADMIRING.

AMONG social nuisances, defend us from those pitiable beings who, through some deficiency in their mental conformation, some lack of vital heat, of acute sensibility, of quick perception, are totally deprived of the faculty to appreciate and the power to admire! Show them a fine statue, and it is stone and marble, chiselled curiously, but conveying no idea, awakening no emotion. Exhibit an exquisite painting, the *chef-d'œuvre* of some grand old master; it is to them merely color upon canvas, and a great surplus of darkish paint. Cull them a fragrant exotic; it is "a nice enough smelling thing;" but the poor flower, withered by contact with that uncongenial touch, is quickly flung aside. Point out a living landscape, replete with the highest forms of pastoral beauty, verdant wood and flashing stream, gently swelling hill and dimpling valley, with the background of a gorgeous sunset, painting the horizon with purple, and crimson, and gold; the landscape is to them but trees, and water, and the sun going down red enough to augur

a "hot day" to-morrow. These specimens of soul-curtailed humanity seem to carry in their hands a disenchanting wand, and, at its waving, leaf, blossom and fruit fall from the tree of life, and the bare, unsightly stalk is left behind; the beauty and poetry of all creation vanish, and hard, positive, unspiritual prose alone remains.

You who are sensitive to sympathetic impressions, to what Swedenborgians call "spheres," avoid these apathetic beings as you would shun infection! Strange and sad to say, there is contagion in the lethargic atmosphere by which they are surrounded. Associate with them, and they insensibly steal away from you the power of appreciation and admiration which they themselves lack.

Mr. Quenchum goes with you to hear a world-renowned orator. As you listen with rapt attention, his words conjure a panorama, pulsating with life and glowing with vivid hues, before your eyes. You soon become excited by his bursts of eloquence, melted by his pathos, fired by his enthusiasm, elevated by his lofty sentiments. You turn with an ejaculation of delight towards Quenchum, and discover that a hideous aperture has taken the place of his mouth, and unmistakable weariness looks out from its yawning depths. Abashed at your own state of delectation, you timidly ask what he thinks of the eminent speaker. He shrugs his shoulders, tells you the man is fair

enough as times go, but there are no Ciceros now-a-days; declares it is a bore that people talk so long and make so much noise; wishes that fellow would have done with his bombast; and adds that he has a deal of mannerism and affectation, while his gestures are entirely too violent; it quite fatigues one to see them! Your ardor suddenly cools; you begin to ask whether that which appeared to you, a moment before, as finished grace, may not be mannerism and affectation; whether those gestures are not too vehement; whether that voice is not too loud; and whether there is not a touch of bombast in the discourse. You have begun to criticise, to question the grounds for your enjoyment; the oration no longer carries you away; you are half ashamed or afraid to recognize its beauties, while sitting beside Quenchum.

Next, Quenchum accompanies you to the opera. It is to hear a prima donna who has gathered laurels in both hemispheres, and received the approving nod of crowned heads, the applause of sceptred hands. The opera represented is one of Bellini's noblest inspirations. You believe it physically impossible that any one can be insensible to its soul-stirring strains. Ah! you know little of the impervious texture of Quenchum's soul. Bellini is as incomprehensible to him as the riddle of the Sphinx. Just as your heart gives an inward echo to the "bravo" that resounds on every side, Quenchum coolly exclaims, "How ab-

surd! The idea of men and women shouting away in that mad style about what they are going to do or what they have done, and talking to each other by bawling in that heathenish fashion! There certainly is nothing more monstrous than an opera! Men poisoning themselves and singing, stabbing themselves and singing, going to battle or to execution singing, eating, drinking, getting married or getting killed, singing! It's highly amusing, but precious nonsense!"

"But," you answer, hesitatingly, and beginning to perceive some element of the ludicrous in the performance which just now awakened your rapture, "but what a glorious voice Madame —— has! Is it not perfect melody? Such power and such sweetness combined! Don't you like her voice?"

"Oh! I dare say her voice is good enough; it's not particularly disagreeable; it's very so-so; but there are no great singers now-a-days."

Startled by such a denouncing assertion, you venture to remark, "Perhaps you do not care for music; perhaps you have no — no — no ear."

"No ear? Why, I suppose I can hear all that din (meaning a magnificent chorus) as plainly as anybody else."

Of course Quenchum has no ear; none of the family of *Nil Admirantem* have musical ears or artistic eyes; if they had, they could not be scions of that pulseless race.

Quenchum annihilates your prima donna, as he extinguished your orator.

Anon you find yourself travelling with Quenchum. He is one of a party crossing the Blue Ridge of Virginia. The grandeur of that august chain of mountains strikes you with admiring awe. The picturesque and sublime are so wonderfully mingled that you almost hold your breath as you contemplate Nature in this imposing robe of majesty. Quenchum sits back in the stage-coach, which is ascending the winding road up the mountain's side, glances out of the window to see what you "are making such a fuss about," and remarks that "it may all be very fine, but a level road would be far preferable, the coach would travel so much faster, and get out of these tiresome mountains more quickly!"

You visit the Natural Bridge and Weyer's marvellous cave, and other noteworthy places. Quenchum pronounces the bridge a tolerable specimen of nature's handiwork, but he don't think it remarkably high, nor by any means perfect in its form, nor, indeed, extraordinary in any way. The cave he pronounces a "downright swindle!" He can discover none of the beautiful sculpturing with which you are all enchanted; he cannot make out Solomon's throne, with its oriental canopy, nor the falls of Niagara, nor the statue of Washington, nor the garden of Paradise; and frigidly asserts that these subterranean wonders are the most "unmitigated humbugs."

Go where you will, it is all the same. Quenchum yawns when everybody else admires; Quenchum is weary when they are enraptured; and just as their enthusiasm is roused to the highest pitch, Quenchum is found to be asleep. But his unidealizing presence is felt by the whole party. His companions are half afraid or ashamed to praise the works of God himself, since Quenchum finds so little to reverence and so much to censure in what God has achieved.

Can such a man worship? Are not all his devotional feelings stifled by the heavy atmosphere of apathy that envelops his spirit? Paley tells us that the unconscious enjoyment of the mere sense of being, is to his mind one of the most convincing proofs of God's goodness. Can God seem good to one who perceives nothing good, nothing enjoyable in his own existence, or in the works of the Supreme Being?

If men carry with them to the other world, as they surely must, the traits that compose their characters in this, Quenchum's emotionless nature must be an eternal blasphemy, an everlasting curse. What would heaven be to such a man? Would he not find the supernal regions a very tiresome locality, the songs of seraphs "so-so," and the company of angels a complete nuisance?

THE CAPACITY FOR ENJOYMENT.

GRATITUDE emanates from the sense of guileless enjoyment, as perfume rises from the flower. The sombre shadow of premature decay rests upon the youngest being, the instant that he ceases to enjoy. The child enjoys involuntarily, unreasoningly; its spontaneous gladness gushes forth like the matin song of the lark, and, like the lark's carol, it is an unconscious hymn of thanks for the capacity it has received. But as childhood merges into youth, youth into manhood, how often the blessed faculty of enjoyment decreases until it is wholly lost!

Pity the man from whom it has departed, for its absence speaks of mental and physical abuse; of unholy indulgence that vitiates the taste, of satiety that palls the appetite, of sin that destroys the powers. All the bloom of his existence has been rudely brushed away. The finest chords of his spirit have become voiceless. Touch them with the finger of Nature, of Art, of Feeling, they give forth no sound. The dust of life's prosaic cares collects upon his heart, until no wind of heaven,

however fragrant or refreshing, can disperse the ashy heap. Can this be in accordance with the laws of order? Is not the highest happiness promised as the guerdon of the greatest goodness? What would avail the offered gift, without the capacity to receive the boon? It was manifestly designed that we should guard and cultivate this Heaven-bestowed faculty for enjoyment. In a healthful, grateful, coherent mind, it may be preserved, increased, matured from year to year, even to the very sunset of existence. The objects by which it is awakened vary, the species of enjoyment itself changes; but the expanding of the soul to pleasurable sensations remains.

Mark how quickly the man who wraps himself up in mere business avocations, and walks ploddingly, with head bent earthward, to his labors, loses his taste for the beauties of nature, for literature, for music, for the arts, for all elevating and refining pursuits. See how he carries to his fireside a dull and joyless influence, which even the smiles of a tender wife and the prattle of lovely children cannot counteract. With him the capacity for enjoyment is not merely uncultivated, but stifled; nipped in the bud. It has never been permitted to force a single blossom through the sheath of circumstance. And when in a few years the man acquires the great wealth for which he bartered this precious faculty, when rest invites him, and even prudence bids him relax his labors,

that his risks may cease, where are his resources against weariness? Not all his gold can purchase back the lost capacity for enjoyment.

Do not imagine that by enjoyment we mean the frittering away of life in the pursuit of trivialities commonly termed pleasure, but the recognition, the appreciation, of the thousand daily blessings that are spread before our careless eyes. Work itself, and the performance of every-day duties, are allied to enjoyment in a cheerful nature — or at least they give to enjoyment the zest that hunger imparts to the simplest food.

No man loses the capacity to enjoy sooner than the luxurious idler. Listless inactivity is an incubus upon the soul, that gradually deadens its powers, until at last a pleasant emotion becomes an unhoped-for though much coveted event, a positive thrill of rapture, an occurrence barely possible. Thus the mind of the world-worn *blasé* is involuntarily closed up against the influent heavens, from whence all pure enjoyment descends.

The selfish man impairs this faculty not less inevitably. He substitutes a cold and spurious gratification for the genuine emotion, and too surely discovers that the retributive pang and penalty united to the former, can never be escaped.

True happiness must be communicated. It is intensified and increased in proportion to its participation with others. The greater the number

of recipients, the deeper, purer, and more ineffable the joy experienced by the communicator. Can angels know a higher felicity than the bliss of initiating the redeemed into their own states of beatitude?

Happiness would not be so rare, so fleeting, nor should we pursue the fugitive through so many forbidden paths, if the healthy capacity for enjoyment were cultivated as an actual, essential virtue. The mental powers would be preserved in perennial freshness, the poetry of existence would not be stripped away with the blossoms of youth, *Ennui* would not be the presiding genius in so many households, nor ingratitude for simple blessings the dominant sin of so many hearts.

THE LOVE OF EXCITEMENT

ADELINE ARDEN is but eighteen. Do not judge her too harshly if nerves highly strung, and a temperament at once impressible and impetuous, manifest themselves in contrarious moods, multiform inconsistencies, and a state of unrest that craves incessant excitement. Deprived of that impetus, she sinks down powerless, her energies quenched, her mind a stagnant pool. What wonder that she hails as an angel's touch any hand that "troubles the waters," as those of Bethesda were stirred of old! She hardly asks whether the welcome disturber be a spirit of good or evil; she is rewakened, revivified in the rushing vortex; that is enough.

Her vehement nature constantly demands strong and rapid emotional changes. When her feet are in swift pursuit of some inspiring object, when her veins swell with their leaping current, when her thoughts kindle with flashes of enthusiasm, when her heart is thrilled with acute feeling, called forth by some actual incident, some ideal personation, or evoked from the pages of some highly-wrought

fiction, then only she seems to herself to exist. Excitement is to her the vital spark, the breath of life. It is a phantom which she chases through every path the demon haunts. She dances after it in the ball-room; she diligently seeks for it in places of public entertainment; she looks for it even in the temple of Love; she hopes to find it in the very church of God. Yes, she will alike desecrate devotion to man and worship for her Creator, by regarding them as sensation mediums. Thus she yields to the fascinations of the "tender passion," not for the sake of love, but of emotion! She indulges in what has aptly been styled "religious dissipation," not for the sake of piety, but of excitement!

And yet, let her pursue the Protean shadow where she will, it treacherously melts from her grasp when found, and leaves her exhausted by the race, depressed by the inevitable re-action, her mental and physical faculties collapsed until new and powerful stimulus rouses them into some fresh activity, alas! only to be followed by equally prostrating results.

Adeline's friends mourn over her short-comings, and, making no allowance for the errors consequent upon her fervent temperament, predict the most frightful fruition from this insatiable passion for excitement. In vain they warn her of the precipice towards which she is hurrying! The very danger heightens her enjoyment! In vain

they would forcibly restrain her as she rashly presses on; while they contemplate the abyss into which she may be plunged with shuddering horror, she stands upon its brink in reckless exultation!

True, her delirious infatuation is sufficiently alarming; but why not seek a more attainable remedy than that of a miraculous metamorphosis of her whole nature, through menacing counsels and compulsive restrictions!

Her sensibilities are keen, do not strive to blunt them; if you succeed, you will only make her hard and dull, exchanging one evil for another. Rest is distasteful to her; do not force her into repose which produces lethargic stagnation. Monotony stupefies her; do not hope to train her rapid feet into the slow and even round of a humdrum existence. But turn the rushing, bubbling current of her thoughts and acts into a pure channel, where the stream may dance and sparkle still, yet minister to some use. Substitute for the alluring phantom which she now chases, some real and holy shape. Give the needful stimulus to her gasping energies through some engrossing occupation. Excite her interest in doing good — in communicating happiness — in promoting noble objects. If her heart be unvitiated, her very love for excitement may be made to lean to virtue's side — may become a powerful agent in achieving glorious ends.

Has not this same unsatisfied passion for excitement impelled women into paths as full of benefaction as those consecrated by the hallowing steps of a Florence Nightingale, a Miss Dix, or a Grace Darling? It is not too much to say that we have known instances in which it has produced these happy results; and, were it fitting, we could cite them to vindicate an assertion as true as it is bold.

That very disquiet—that sleepless activity which we condemn in Adeline — is but the curbless impulse of a vigorous spirit to do something, to feel something, to be conscious of its own powers of thought, feeling and action. That ceaseless leaping forward, and leaping upward, which belong to such temperaments is not in itself an evil. The same up-springing, unslumbering motion causes all creation to palpitate, and expand, and fructify.

Let us not then rashly rebuke the restless excitability of an untrained and ardent nature. Let us not say to such a being as Adeline: "You shall forego all these varied excitements for which you yearn — which you seem to need to render your life agreeable — nay, endurable! You shall not partake of amusements which you find so exhilarating. You shall not read books which engross you so entirely. You shall not enjoy the society of those who have such power over your emotions!"

Instead of these admonitions and restrictions, give her wholesome and invigorating, ay, and suf-

ficiently *stimulating* mental nourishment. Do not deny her amusements, but see that they are rational, that they are intellectually or physically profitable. Supply her with books of deep interest, but let their pages be so pure that they can awaken none but holy thoughts, and impart none but high aspirations. Place her in the midst of agreeable associates, but be certain that they are beings whose influence will aid in moulding and balancing her character. And, above all, furnish her with agreeable employment. Let her exuberant activity expend itself in work! work! work! To such as she, the most aidant and remediant of agents! Lethe and nepenthe combined! Mark, if the result does not prove that this very love of excitement, the curse and destruction of many a richly dowered spirit, can, through wise direction, be made the medium of developing, perfecting, and beautifying a disposition in which it is inherent.

MAIDENHOOD IN LOVE.

N nature, what flower puts on its most brilliant hues, or expands in its fullest perfection, before the sun's caressing warmth and tingent light call forth the hidden possibilities of its species? In womanhood, what character assumes its most radiant coloring, or develops its highest beauty before its mysterious capabilities are evoked by the electric touch of love? We do not use the word lightly. We do not allude to that weather-vane of fancy which turns with every accidental breath; that evanescent *penchant* which leans wherever novelty attracts; that passing passion which evaporates like morning dew — which belongs to the morning season of impressible temperaments. It is only upon a pure, holy, and lasting emotion that we can bestow the name of love without fear of desecration.

That love enters reverently into the inmost sanctuary of a maiden's heart, fills her mind with one sovereign image, rises like a sun in the firmament of her soul, and imbues her whole world of thought and feeling with its own tints. Then falls

the beautifying veil of moss upon the roses of her youth. The soft bloom diffuses itself over the grapes for life's vintage. Hope's whispering voice of promise makes perpetual music in her ears. The golden haze of anticipation envelops her future in misty glory. She moves in an atmosphere of festal joy. All germs of goodness, and strength, and loveliness, lying dormant in the depths of her spirit, are quickened. Her very existence seems suddenly enlarged.

Often she is unconscious of this marvellous revolution. She does not pause to analyze her own tumultuous sensations. Though the sound of a coming step, *his* well-known step, makes her pulses throb with almost painful pleasure; though his lightest tone thrills her, even when the words are unheard; though at the mention of his name, coupled with praise, she smiles unaware, and vainly seeks to repress the involuntary blush, she hides from herself, as long as possible, that love throbbed in her pulses, thrilled her with that voice, woke that smile, and conjured up that blush.

But when the tender knowledge presses upon her, when the sweet confession has once been drawn from her, when she has once yielded up her heart, how lavishly she pours out its whole wealth! Like Juliet, her "bounty is as boundless as the sea, her love as deep," and the more she gives the larger grows her store, until love and bounty both prove infinite. Like Portia, unambitious in her

wish for her own aggrandizement, yet, for her lover's sake, she fondly desires to be "trebled twenty times herself, a thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich." And while she bestows so profusely, and desires to possess in greater abundance that she may have the power to impart more munificently, how little she demands in return! Yes, *little*, if we set aside the playful, or coquettish exactions of her inborn, womanly caprice. Is it not little to be trustingly content with mere *words;* to be satisfied with assurances that she is beloved; to require no actions, no sacrifices as proofs of that passion? And what loving woman demands any? even at the moment when an irresistible impulse prompts her to offer the strongest evidences of her own self-abnegating, unmeasured, unbartered affection. Sometimes she even appears to rejoice in the trials that test the strength of her devotion; to glory in the opposition that proves its powers of resistance. No ordeal seems too great for her heroism to tempt. Wrapped in Love's protecting banner, she knows that she will pass through victoriously.

It is strange to see how quickly she merges her own identity into that of the man whom she loves; how involuntarily she lays aside her own volition, and looks with his eyes, and reflects his thoughts, and unknowingly illustrates to him the truth of Coleridge's declaration, that "love is the completion of our being in another."

Passing strange is it too, to behold a young maiden upon whom affection has been richly poured from her cradle, who has literally been the idol of her home, turn from all these life-long worshippers to a comparative stranger, and cling to him with a tacit declaration that the *love of all* is outweighed by the *love of one;* that the very blame of that one is more precious than the praises of all others.

Strange, indeed, to find her ready to make any sacrifice, to renounce any happiness, to forego any advantage, that she may share his future. Alas! too often to see her willing to wound the tenderest of mothers, the truest of fathers, to save that stranger an hour's pain, or give him a moment's pleasure. At the first blush this reckless, unreasoning, all-absorbing devotion seems unnatural; and yet it is in strict accordance with Nature's unalterable law. Love — true Love is the supreme ruler; the omnipotent sovereign over the heart's whole empire, and all human affections are but its subjects.

True love? Where is the Ithuriel spear that will teach us to recognize this God-blessed Love from the "Puck of Passion"? Bring the one, great, unfailing touchstone, and try the thousand pleasant cheats we irreverently call "love," and how few will not melt at the touch, or assume some meaner form, and take some lower title! *The only test of love is its immutability.* The heavenly spark kin-

dled by the Divine Hand shares the immortality of that great source from whence all love descends. The flame cannot expire.

"From heaven it came to heaven returneth."

Thus, Love cannot recede, it cannot stand still; it must obey the law of eternal progression, must advance onward and upward, must grow stronger, broader, purer, with every hour of its existence. If it falter, languish, cool, it is not love, — never was love, — never can become love.

The most exquisite illustration which we have ever met, of the affluent love of a high-souled woman, is that given by Mrs. Browning in her Portuguese Sonnets. Surely, a truer, fuller love-utterance never rang out from woman's heart and lips! Yet Mrs. Browning has only painted, with startling force and unsurpassable eloquence, the emotions which thousands of women who love have, either consciously or unconsciously, experienced; though few women, if any, have been gifted with her miraculous power of breathing forth her inmost soul in rythmic concord of sweet sounds. What woman who has loved, *or is capable of loving*, will find our quotations too ample?

The sonnets are addressed by the (supposed) Portuguese lady to her lover. She portrays to him how entirely by love, "The face of all the world is changed," to the eyes of her who loves; how beautifully she is "taught the whole of life in a new rhythm." How even

"The name of country — heaven — is changed away
For where thou art or shall be — there or here."

She tells him that

"The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy hand in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, he hears that name of thine
And sees within mine eyes the tears of two."

She shows him how worthy of acceptance is the love of the most humble; how beautiful is mere love itself; how impossible it is that there should be anything low in love, even when the lowliest love; how God accepts the love of the meanest creatures, *because* they love. How through *her* love, *she* stands transfigured and glorified in her lover's presence, and

"How that great work of love enhances nature's."

She pleads that he may not love her for her deserts, which she accounts poor, and says:

"If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
I love her for her smile — her look — her way.
Of speaking gently — for a trick of thought
Which falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day —
For these things in themselves, beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee — and love so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry —

Since one might well forget to weep who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby.
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayest love on through love's eternity."

She gives him a lock of hair, the first she ever gave to man, the lock where he will find pure the kiss her mother gave her when she died; and tells him that "the soul's Rialto hath its merchandise," and she "barters curl for curl upon that mart," and claims a lock from his brow to lay upon her heart, where it shall lack no natural heat until that heart grows cold in death.

The womanly adjuration "tell me you love me!" is one familiar to the ears of all men who have been devotedly loved. Few of them can have failed to discover that a woman is never tired of being told what she knows so well. The Portuguese lady, with the same earnest yearning to hear what she already believes, exclaims:

"Say over again, and yet once over again
That thou dost love me!"

And adds in vindication of her longing to hear that sweet assurance,

"Who can fear
Too many stars, though each in heaven should roll?
Too many flowers, though each should crown the year?
Say thou dost love me — love me — love me — toll
The silver iterance — only minding, dear,
To love me also in silence, with thy soul."

She turns to her letters and musingly loosens the string that bound them, and lets them drop upon her knees. Though they are but "dead paper, mute and white," to her they seem "alive and quivering" against her tremulous hands. She tenderly reminds him what *this* said, and what *that;* a simple thing, and yet it made her weep. And she tells him how she "sank and quailed" when she read the one which held those words, "Dear, I love thee!" and how the ink of another had paled by lying upon her fast-beating heart.

Then, with that vague sense of fear which every woman feels at the contemplation of yielding up all for one, she asks him, solemnly:

> "If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
> And *be* all to me? Shall I never miss
> Home-talk and blessing, and the common kiss
> That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange
> When I look up, to drop on a new range
> Of walls and floors — another home than this?
> Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
> Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?"

With reverent words, almost with holy awe, she dwells upon the memory of his first kisses.

> "First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
> The fingers of this hand wherewith I write,
> And evermore it grew more clean and white,
> Slow to world greetings — quick with its 'oh, list!'
> When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst
> I could not wear here plainer to my sight,
> Than that first kiss. The second passed in height

The first. and sought the forehead, and half missed,
Half falling on the hair. O, beyond meed!
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,
With sanctifying sweetness did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down
In perfect, purple state! Since when, indeed,
I have been proud, and said — 'My love, my own!'"

She tries to measure that which is measureless — her love for him.

"How do I love thee, let me count the ways;
I love thee to the depth, and breadth, and height,
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace —
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right,
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise;
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints — I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears of all my life! — and if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death!"

After that inspired outburst of woman's perfect love, what word can be added?

BACHELORHOOD IN LOVE.

IF we place beside our slight, imperfect sketch of "Maidenhood in Love," its corresponding pendant of Bachelorhood in Love, be it understood, that the latter, ruder portrait is designed solely for the contemplation of our fair young sisters throughout the land. Their lovers may naturally raise an outcry against this unceremonious lifting of the finely painted masks which they assume for the courting field, as punctiliously as knights of old, who battled for ladye love, let down their vizors for the tournament. But the alarmed wooers have little to fear from our revelations. Though we should unsparingly tear from their faces the charming counterfeit, every love-blinded maiden would refuse to recognize the beloved one's lineaments beneath; would cling to the bewitching mask, and fondly pronounce it the veritable countenance.

And yet, gentle sister, the mask your suitor wears, though it may be impalpable to you, is not less a reality. The *exaltè* state of mind produced by his very passion, causes — nay, compels him to

practice deception; often an unintentional deception — sometimes an unconscious deception — always a fascinating deception — but not the less deception, though you believe so trustingly in its illusions. What is stranger still, your admirer, while his infatuation lasts, honestly imagines himself to be all that he seems to be to you, who look at him through the idealizing medium of love. And the universe holds no such idealizer as the glamor of this same love. Neither man nor woman is susceptible of an emotion into which the poetical element is so largely infused as love. There is no beautifier in creation so subtle and marvellous in its workings as love. Your lover sees his own image mirrored in your eyes, and is enchanted with the flattering reflection. No wonder; all the harsh lines are softened — the most insignificant features acquire character — the most sombre coloring glows with fervid hues. He may be a dull man, but your presence animates him; he may be coldly taciturn, but, by your side, his silence is eloquent; he may be rough and insensate, but to you he is all gentleness and feeling; he may be proud and self-sufficient, but at your feet he is humble and self-forgetful; he may be prosaic to the last degree, but there is voiceless poetry in his devotion to you. However narrow his nature, it expands at your touch; however frigid his temperament, it grows impassioned beneath your smile; however superficial his emotions, they are intensi-

fied by your response; however great his failings, they melt into the background in your sight; while every attractive attribute of mind or person which he actually possesses, is magnified and thrown into bold relief.

How elated you become by the ardor with which he pursues you! What obstacles will he not combat, what stratagems will he not use, what victories will he not gain over "that unspiritual god" called Circumstance, to win you! And how delightfully he fosters your love of rule by making you feel your boundless power over him. He may be a despot to all others, but he glories in becoming the slave of your wishes; he even makes laws of your wildest whims. He is enraptured by your most trifling token of favor, and deeply wounded by your lightest displeasure! A transient smile, a passing word, is to him a rich guerdon; a cold expression, an averted look, is a transfixing sword! How charmingly he gratifies your vanity by placing you high above all other women, and discovering traits and gifts that you never imagined were yours! And how entrancing you find the sphere of congeniality that encompasses you both, and draws you closer and closer in ecstatic union! You are amazed that his tastes are in such complete harmony with yours; that his views of life, his hopes and aims accord so entirely with your own; that there is such perfect sympathy between you! How can you fail of life-long happiness

linked with one who is so thoroughly your counterpart—your completing self? You never dream that the sweet seeming of this temporary similarity may only have been wrought through that delusive magnetism men miscall love.

But when the inspiring excitement of pursuit is over, when the hope of gaining and the fear of losing no longer fan love's flame, when the sober realities of life take the place of rapturous anticipations, when the fancied angel descends from the clouds to which her lover's imagination lifted her, and softly takes her wingless place by his hearthstone, then, fair sister, prepare to see the mask which you resolutely ignored, drop at your feet! Nerve yourself to behold all that is unreal in the past vanish away. Be strong to bear the knowledge, if you have drawn a blank in the great blindfold lottery. Thank God, with a never-slumbering, never-exhausted gratitude if you have received that rare and sumless prize which will make you rich in heart, beyond fear of bankruptcy, during your whole existence.

When you pass from the delicious trance of courtship into the clairvoyant state of matrimony, if the apparent sympathies which existed between you and your lover gradually fade, if the accordant traits mysteriously disappear, if his fervor subside, or evince itself only by a fitful fondness, if his admiration cool, or can only be roused by some unwonted stimulus, if indifference close his eyes to

your *malaise*, or leave him unmoved by your suffering, if he see you without seeing, and hear you without noting, if he seek any companionship, be it of man or woman, in preference to yours, if he regard you merely as a pretty toy, a useful ornament in his home; then you have been cheated with a blank, and God's mercy alone can soften your desolate doom, and strengthen you against besetting temptations, and save you from the destroying sin of filling that miserable void in your aching, yearning, unsatisfied heart, with some secret and unhallowed idol.

Young maiden, standing beneath Hope's arching rainbow, with its glory reflected upon your furrowless brow, and its light in your earnest eyes, you turn away doubtingly, yet fearingly, from this disheartening but every-day picture. See, we place another before your wishful gaze; another, as real but more rare. Your lover's transports are over, but they are succeeded by a thoughtful tenderness that unfailingly prefers your well-being to his own; his ardor changes to a steady devotion that daily increases in strength; he ceases to talk to you of his love, because it has become too deep to find, or require expression; but his actions are more eloquent than his most impassioned words have ever been. He lifts you in his strong arms above the angry waves that dash around his own feet; he takes you as a dove into his warm bosom, and shelters you from the rude winds that fiercely

assail him; he is never, for a moment, oblivious of your tastes, wishes, comforts; he turns to you with a longing need for your presence; he is solitary without you, and nev r lonely when you are near; your companionship which was a luxury, grows an absolute necessity; he pours the history of his triumphs and failures into your ears without a doubt that you will help to bear the latter as willingly as you share the former; he thinks you as attractive when bowed down and overshadowed by sorrow as when uplifted and radiant with joy; he lingers by your side when you are prostrated by sickness, as gladly as when you are glowing with health; he fears death because it will part him from you, and prizes life because you live! The great Dispenser has entrusted to your keeping, to wear proudly, in the face of the world, the very choicest of all the earthly jewels in his vast treasury!

A pair of speaking eyes ask, "How shall we know when it is this gem of price, or its cunning imitation, which a lover offers for our acceptance?" Alas! we have no answer for that question. She who receives must pray for the power herself to distinguish between the precious stone and its glittering counterfeit.

WOMAN-FRIENDSHIPS.

LL the world gives ready credence to the possibility of friendship between man and man; some people are even inclined to believe that the immutable attachment of Orestes and Pylades, of Æneas and Achates, may be repeated among men in these inconstant, modern times; but the devotion of woman to one of her own sex, the sincerity with which she clasps the hand or presses the lip of woman, the genuineness of her self-sacrifices daily made for a beloved sister, are subjects of a vast amount of skepticism. Philosophic writers, poets, wits, have openly declared their disbelief in the existence of the strange phenomena of woman-friendships. Even Diana Mullock, who has written so many lines of woman which bear the impress of truth and wisdom, who has solved so many of the enigmas inseparable from woman's nature, gravely shakes her head when she touches upon "female friendships," and calls up such a doubting host of "ifs" and "buts" to usher in the possibility of perfect love between

women, that we inevitably draw the inference that she sides with the unbelievers.

On the other hand, Shakspeare, that "intellectual miracle," (as he has been called), whose seer-like vision pierced deeper than the eyes of grosser mortals, — Shakspeare, whose magic plummet sounded the unreached, uncomprehended depths of the human soul, reveals the hearts of women united by adamatine links.

Instance the clinging fondness of Helena and Hermia, in "Midsummer Night's Dream:"

> "We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
> Have, with our needles, created both one flower,
> Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
> Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
> As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
> Had been incorporate, So we grew together,
> Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet a unison in partition;
> Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
> So with two seeming bodies, but one heart,
> Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
> Due but to one, and crownèd with one crest."

We have another illustration of woman-friendship, in its consummate beauty, portrayed in the passionate, protecting love of Beatrice for Hero, in "Much Ado About Nothing;" and in "As You Like It," a still stronger picture in the self-renouncing, absolute devotion for Rosalind of the gentle Celia, who startles her wrathful father with the declaration:

——"if she be a traitor,
Why so am I; we still have slept together,
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together;
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled and inseparable!"

When the implacable duke banishes Rosalind, Celia replies:

"Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege,
I cannot live out of her company!"

Shakspeare against the world! for who knew the world one half so well?

Not only are we impressed by the conviction that his glowing portraitures of woman-friendship are life-drawn; not only have we perfect faith in the possibility of a thoroughly unselfish, all-absorbing attachment between two women, but we entertain the belief that there are certain female minds so constituted that a tender friendship with one of the same sex is positively indispensible to happiness. Such natures experience an irresistible impulse to confide in one who, enlightened by her own yearnings and failings, can understand feminine wants and frailties; who can look upon feminine insufficiencies, not from a strong, manly, but a weak, womanly point of view.

A woman may be the most irreproachable of wives to the best of husbands, and yet feel a void in her affections, a chamber in her large heart unfilled; a something needful lacking, if there be no

Celia into whose ear she can pour the history of her joys and sorrows, to whom she can turn for advice, and lenient judgment, and comprehending sympathy.

There are trivial domestic difficulties, petty annoyances, perplexing positions, which no woman of tact will trouble and bewilder her husband by relating to him. If he is a man of decided intellect, he will not attach any importance to these small crosses, will not even understand these minor miseries, and the wife is thrown back upon her own resources, vexed and disheartened by her failing attempt to enlist his aid or sympathy. If he is a man of limited mental powers, he will be more annoyed than she, and will only increase her vexations without disentangling a single thread of the fine web of dilemmas into which she is snared. But to a sympathetic female companion, a woman may enter into all the details of these insignificant trials, and, clasping a friend's hand, she may search for and discover the clue that can guide her out of her domestic labyrinth.

The higher love, the love for man, neither absorbs nor forbids the lower, the friendship for woman. They are distinct, emotional capacities, which may be co-existent in one heart. They are evidences of a rich, spiritual organization. If they dwell together in pristine purity, one affection strengthens rather than weakens the other.

Who can deny that two women, through a mys-

terious affinity, may become, and recognize each other as sisters in heart? Who can doubt that there is a bond of sisterhood between their spirits, as real and as strong as the tie of blood between sisters? And if this be true, must not that internal kinship outlive even the dissevering stroke of death, and proclaim them true sisters in the great hereafter? But in this lower sphere, what name can we give to their attachment but that of "woman-friendship?"

CONGENIALITY.

CONGENIALITY! what is it but the genial sense of appreciation, united to sympathy, for which all the world is yearning? And well may mankind seek that inspiring, rejoicing influence. In a congenial atmosphere even a dull, contracted nature is vivified and enlarged, while a spirit that has height and breadth expands and develops beyond its own recognition. All its powers are vitalized and strengthened and called into their most puissant activity. The pulses beat tunefully, the brain has a sparkling clearness, discordant emotions are quiescent, a delicious serenity pervades the whole being, and the mantle of universal love envelops all creation.

That state, sublimed and perfected, hereafter must be the condition of the blessed, for heaven and its "many mansions" could not exist, unembraced by a sphere of absolute congeniality.

When a highly sensitive organization is thrown into unavoidable contact with uncongenial associates, a sensation of repulsion is experienced, followed by mental paralysis. All the utterances of

the heart are suddenly repressed, and eloquence itself becomes as tongue-tied as Cordelia. Frosty flakes creep through the shuddering veins, melted icicles drop upon the scintillations of wit, until not a spark flies up. And if this state of torpid wretchedness be prolonged, it reproduces the inquisitional torture of the iron cell that slowly but obviously contracted about a captive, until his very identity was crushed out.

Therefore is it that all hearts here below are longing for and seeking a joy-giving, peace-conferring sympathy. Some never find it through a long life, and grow skeptical of its existence; some hastily snatch at every spurious semblance, and soon sorrowfully discover that they have grasped at shadows; while the happier few receive all their conscious strength from the sweet certainty that they are journeying onward and upward *en rapport* with kindred spirits.

But, for this soul-refreshing congeniality to exist between individuals, similitude of character is not essential. Mental dissimilarity is often a more potent agent in its creation. A mind of great magnitude will stoop to look for sympathetic throbs in some lower, poorer nature. A weak or timid heart, that needs support, finds congeniality in contact with a strong, vigor-imparting intellect. A restless, nervous temperament delights in all peaceful and tranquillizing associations. A doubting spirit often attaches itself to one full of earnest faith.

Thus, when the attributes, lacking in one spiritual conformation, are supplied by the abundance of another, a harmonious whole and perfect congeniality is the result.

But, proportionate to the happiness communicated by the satisfied sense of congeniality, is the danger with which its flattering counterfeit menaces. The mind whose thoughts we imagine to be in unison with ours, the heart that we believe is vibrating to our own with a quick comprehension of our aspirations, our disappointments, our griefs, our joys, has the power to obtain a fatal command over our judgment and volition.

Willis was not far from the truth in declaring that a woman is always in danger when she feels herself "comprehended." Certain it is that the false and scheming gain their surest foothold in her confidence by successfully simulated congeniality, and the persuasive appearance of understanding the movement of that inner life to which no common eyes can penetrate. Sympathy is the talismanic watch-word by which they pass the sentinels of Reason and enter the unguarded citadel of her affections.

To discover and touch with magical dexterity those delicate, invisible, sympathetic chords, is the secret of public power. Through them the multitude is fired, swayed, subdued; through them the crowd reacts upon the master mind by which it is kindled and controlled, and invests that mind with

tenfold might. The lustre of the most radiant intellect may be wholly extinguished by the saturating agency of uncongenial surroundings, or it may be brightened to inspiration, by the receptive power of sympathy.

THE LOVE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

THE love of the beautiful is of celestial origin. It is the holy offspring of an affection for the good and true. The myriad phases of earthly beauty that spring up in life's humblest pathways, are visible symbols of the infinite, ineffable beauty of diviner spheres. How affluent is the exuberant earth in revelations of loveliness! They burst into life beneath our feet, in

> "The bright mosaics that with storied beauty
> The floor of Nature's temple tesselate"—

they beat the air with iris-tinted pinions above our heads, stretch out enchanting vistas before our eyes, dance on the crest of the impetuous waterfall, slumber upon the bosom of the tranquil stream, gaze at their own images in the mirror of the glassy lake, look down from the effulgent stars, unfurl their orient-hued banners at the waving of Aurora's hand, shoot their meteoric lights before wondering eyes, arch the prismatic bow in the blue canopy above, start into life whenever Nature

lifts her sceptre, an undisputed sovereign; sparkle in every quivering dew-drop, pulsate through the great artery of all creation. And day and night, these glorious witnesses of Beauty's all-pervading existence are chanting in chorus, "Love the beautiful, for those immortal fountains, whence all purity descends, are beauty's well-spring!" And the poet lifts his voice to echo the universal hymn, and sings,

> ——— "thus was Beauty sent from heaven,
> The lovely ministress of Truth and Good
> In this dark world; for Truth and Good are one,
> And Beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
> With like participation. Wherefore, then,
> O sons of earth! would ye dissolve the tie?"

But the world is not embellished by Beauty which prodigal Nature alone unfolds; her handmaiden Art develops the beautiful with emulating skill, and when she weds a pure creation to a noble use, her brow is radiant with Nature's borrowed crown! The vivid reflex of the painter's genius mirrored upon our walls; the triumph of the sculptor's chisel reared in our homes, are not mere tasteful, profitless luxuries. There is a soul-refining power in their familiar contemplation; they quicken those higher sensibilities which time is making a constant effort to deaden; they find avenues to the dormant heart hitherto undiscovered; they lift the daily thoughts out of the mo-

notonous round of petty solicitudes, out of the mire of commonplace cares which so quickly destroy the freshness of the spirit; they fill the mind, through the eye, with elevating images, with visions of serener realms, until the clamor and tumult of this world sound afar off. Thus inspired, Art shares Nature's glory when she achieves the beautiful, and lays the offering upon a Heaven-dedicated altar.

There is a class of beings who seem especially gifted with beautifying eyes,

"With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold."

They have an unconscious power of idealizing whatever they look upon in nature, in art, in humanity. They deck the granite hardness of reality with the tender and clinging ivy of sentiment, and cover the sharp angles of bare facts with the velvety mosses of imagination. With them there is ever an under-current of poetry flowing beneath life's turgid stream of tritest prose. They are the world's true poets, though perchance, they cannot lay claim to the smallest foothold of territory in Parnasus, and have never been impelled by the stirring of the "divine afflatus," to pen an inspiration. They are they true artists, though they paint no pictures, for they have the artist-instinct throbbing within, and a living panorama of graceful forms, symmetrical outlines, and glorious scenes is

ever passing in long procession before their mental vision. Better still, they are constantly moved by an irresistible impulse to make Beauty and Use clasp hands. As Linnæus constructed a dial out of flowers, and, by the expanding and closing of delicate blossoms, told the time of day as accurately as if it had been chronicled by the intricate machinery of a watch, so the passing hours of those who inherit this beautifying temperament are marked by the blooming and folding of life's choicest flowers.

THE SUNNY SIDE.

THERE could be no shadow were there no light, no eclipse were there no luminary to be obscured, no dark side to things spiritual and natural, were there no bright; and the former implies and testifies to the existence of the latter.

"Let the night be ne'er so dark,
The moon is surely *somewhere* in the sky!"

To discover that moon beneath its thickest shroud, to have perfect faith in the reality of this sunny side to all creation, to seek it out with unflagging hope, to draw it forth from the gloomiest abyss, until it rise radiant as Truth from the depths of her fabled well, — oh! that is one of the most joy-imparting, peace-producing, of all life's secrets.

Doubtless, Dr. Johnson meant to convey a very impressive counsel when he said that the habit of looking at the best side of every event was "far better than a thousand pounds a year," but we think he made a very low estimate of the value

of that blessed faculty which lines all the clouds with silver.

Wealth cannot be computed by our actual possessions, but by the exorbitance or moderation of our desires; nor happiness gauged by the enjoyments within our grasp, but by those after which we aspire. Sunny temperaments smilingly deem whatever they receive sufficient, and neither their affluence nor their felicity have regard to pounds and pence, weights and measures. To them Poverty wears the graceful robes of Content, and would look no fairer in the diadem of luxury. To them the stream of sorrow is like that fountain of Anletus, which rose salted from the earth, but sweetened in its course, for their grief can have no lasting taste of bitterness. There is a clear, blue firmament in their souls where the star of Hope always shines, piercing the most noisome vapors that ascend from a pestilential world beneath.

Alas! how few is the number of these bright and brightening natures! How countless are the hosts of those who resolutely turn their eyes from the golden lights gleaming through the darkness of life's picture; who, with irrational perversity, augment all its shadows! who, when calamities threaten, experience all their anguish in anticipation; who, when sorrows really arrive, magnify their sum; and who, even when griefs are removed, cling to their sombre remembrance, and torture themselves with evoking phantoms of departed wo!

Sometimes this morbid tendency of the mind to "take trouble on interest," to multiply its actual amount, and conjure up its vanished ghosts, is inherent and hereditary. Then it gives birth to a demon, difficult, indeed, to exorcise, for his feet are planted among the deepest fibres of the heart, and his murky form rises in giant strength, and possesses the soul as a lawful home. Religion, Reason and Philosophy must unite in a powerful triad, and wage fierce war against the fiend before he can be cast out, and life's sunny side can be revealed to the spirit he has enslaved.

Sometimes this despondency of character is the offspring of sheer ingratitude, and a disregard of, or disbelief in, the perpetual guidance of an overruling Providence. Then is the daily punishment it entails no heavier than its sin, and the sunny side shall never be disclosed to these unthankful hearts until they are cleansed and illumined.

Sometimes this mental gloom springs from purely physical causes. D'Israeli takes a very prosaic, but common sense and useful view of the subject, when he says, "Our domestic happiness often depends upon the state of our biliary or digestive organs, and the little disturbances of conjugal life may be more efficaciously cured by the physician than the moralist." Happily the bilious mists that veil the sunshine from the eyes of this dismal class of beings may be dispelled by a few strokes of the cabalistic pen, and the sufferer find an open sesame

to the sunny region conveyed in a medical prescription.

Oh! if we only believed that on the stormiest sea, in the dreariest night, the mysterious finger of Divine Providence is always pointing to some faint, far-off, beacon flame, which will grow larger and larger the more steadily we gaze, and become brighter and brighter as Faith takes her seat at the helm and guides our bark nearer and nearer, until we behold a luminous harbor of consolation rising out of the chaotic gloom, from how much hopeless anguish we should be shielded! If we could only be convinced that the saddest event *has* its sunny side, how many hours of groping in despairing darkness we should escape! If we would only resolutely use our eyes to search for that sunny side, how many tears they would be spared! If we could only accept the interpretation of the term happiness, which supposes it (in the words of Diana Muloch) "to consist in having our highest faculties most highly developed, and in use to their fullest extent," how quickly we should be numbered with the dwellers upon that glorious sunny-side of the earth!

BLACK DAYS.

HAVE you ever known days that were black? Have you ever known days in which everything went wrong, as though some invisible hand turned your whole life topsy-turvy? Did you ever get up in the morning after the manner which the juveniles style "wrong side foremost"? Did you stub your toes with the first step you took? Did your strings tangle themselves into Gordian knots, your buttons fly off like rockets, your hooks mysteriously vanish, just when you were in the greatest hurry? Did glass and china break spontaneously beneath your most careful touch? Did the dress you fancied short, magically lengthen itself to make you stumble? Did every sharp instrument you handled, pierce or cut you, of its own accord? Did some undiscoverable individual throw your neatly-arranged work into confusion, and abstract the book in which you were deeply interested? Did the pen spatter, and scratch, and obstinately blot the paper, when you attempted to write? Did the current of your thoughts, which usually flowed with pleasant free-

dom, suddenly become stagnant? Did the persons you least wished to see, force themselves into your presence, and those you loved best remain absent? Did you labor with more than wonted zeal, yet accomplish nothing? Did it seem as though some evil genius walked in your steps, and flung stones in your path, and turned all your actions awry, and made all your efforts failures, until you grew crosser and crosser, and became quite unbearable to yourself, to say nothing of being unendurable to others? With your equilibrium destroyed, all your purposes defeated, your spirits not dampened merely, but drowned, did you not emphatically call the day black?

Such unbalanced days, when life seems all a game of cross purposes, will come to most of us, and how is their unholy spell to be broken? Truly a momentous question! Very often the presence of some being gifted with a strong heart, genial temperament, and sympathetic nature, will chase all the shadows, restore serenity to the ruffled temper, and evoke order out of confusion,—even as the voice, the look, of one single angel can put to flight a legion of evil spirits. But it is not always that visitants, happily endowed with this calming, cheering, demon-exorcising power, enter in, and tinge our overhanging clouds with the splendor of their own internal sunshine.

Oftener, far, if we would not succumb to the depressing influences that weigh upon us in these

black days, we must valiantly take up arms ourselves to war against the invisible enemy. If, in the midst of the labor that is proving futile — the duty that we are illy performing — the annoyances that are goading us with needles, we could only be induced to pause and ponder, and look our own mood steadily in the face, we might gain a speedy victory over a host of these Liliputian tormentors.

A state of gloom is always an unthankful, ungodly state. Sometimes it is produced by some physical derangement; sometimes it springs out of some hidden discontent, some haunting disappointment, some foreboding of menacing misfortune, and sometimes it is untraceable to any source. If its origin be physical, is it not incumbent upon us to use every attainable means to restore the health of the body, that the sanitary tone of the mind may return? If discontent or disappointment have thrown this sable pall over the spirit, will it not be lifted by the remembrance that all events in life are Heaven-ordered, and no apparent failure or sorrow is permitted that cannot become an instrument of spiritual advancement? If the black day's heaviness proceed from some threatening evil, will it not be dispelled by the reflection that it is folly to suffer in anticipation the anguish of an affliction which we may possibly be spared? If the incapacitating depression have no traceable origin, will not the dusky phantom van-

ish when brought before the bar of Common Sense?

Could we only force ourselves to remember that a day full of these contrarieties is a day wasted, and will leave a page, dark as our own gloom, upon that life-chronicle, to every leaf of which angel fingers will point, every line of which we must read in the hereafter, before we take the places prepared for us, or rather, which we are daily preparing for ourselves — could we only remember this, the weakest of us would find strength to shake off the incubus, and no black day, however gloomily it began, would end in darkness.

BASHFULNESS.

OW often bashfulness passes for humility—for a painful want of self-appreciation — for a modest undervaluation of one's own merits! Yet the self-consciousness which gives rise to bashfulness almost always springs from sensitive self-esteem, a latent love of approbation, a nervous dread that others will not rate us as highly as we prize ourselves!

What is it but self-consciousness which prevents a bashful person from entering a room without fancying that all eyes are turned upon him? What is it but self-consciousness which makes him fearfully certain of attracting attention if he ventures to move? What is it but self-consciousness which impresses him with the conviction that all ears are quickened to listen to the unmeaning words that hesitatingly fall from his lips? What is it but self-consciousness which causes him to commit any number of awkward blunders while he is speculating on the judgment that will be passed upon his most insignificant actions?

People are bashful because they cannot ignore

their own personality, cannot put self aside, and act as though neither others nor they themselves were thinking of their individual existence.

Bashful persons never behave naturally, because they are never unconscious of their own deportment. They never shine in conversation, because they are haunted by the fear that they cannot do justice in language to the ideas which are struggling for utterance. They never appear to advantage, because they are tortured by the instinctive knowledge that in spite of being very sensible, sober-minded individuals, they are always hovering upon the borders of the ridiculous. If you laugh with them, they imagine that you laugh at them. If you sympathize with them, you cause them mortification. If you forbear to notice them, you wound them by your supposed indifference. They have a morbid horror of publicity, and yet they constantly become conspicuous, simply by never forgetting themselves.

Goldsmith, in his portrait of Charles Marlow, illustrates a species of bashfulness, which only exists in the presence of equals and superiors, and degenerates into positive insolence and unbridled freedom when thrown in contact with inferiors. Here self-consciousness is the moving principle again. Charles Marlow was frightened into the most absurd exhibitions of bashfulness by the dread of making an unfavorable impression upon those whose opinion he valued; but, being totally

indifferent to the appreciation of a hotel keeper, or a bar maid, before them, the bashful youth, who could not lift his eyes to the face of a lady, and had not courage to address a few civil sentences to her respected father, was transformed into a very monster of egotism, arrogance, and impertinence.

When we use the word bashfulness, we do not mean to confound the term with genuine diffidence, self-distrust, modesty; nor do we allude to the charming timidity which flings a roseate veil over the conscious cheek of youth. The shamefacedness of bashfulness is not diffidence or self-distrust, for it does not distrust its own intrinsic worth, it only distrusts that others will fully recognize that worth. It is not modesty or humility, for it does not humbly estimate itself, it is only fearful of the undervaluing estimation of others.

True modesty is retiring, shrinking, humble, but it is at the same time self-possessed, composed, unconspicuous. A modest man does not commit the blunders of his bashful brother, because he is not confused by failing efforts to seem what he is not. He does not conceive himself to be a brilliant person, or desire others to believe so, and does not comport himself as though brilliancy were expected of him. He does not fancy that he is of sufficient consequence to be remarked or remarkable. He goes on his way, if observed, unconscious of observation; if neglected, indifferent to neglect. He does not think of himself at all and consequent-

ly does not imagine that others are thinking of him. If his hidden merits are accidentally discovered, the blush that suffuses his cheek is not one of painful bashfulness, but of startled humility and pleasant surprise. His manner evinces that he neither demands nor expects consideration, and consequently it has a conciliating tendency, inclining the world, so niggardly to those who claim their rights, to give modest worth its fullest due.

Let the bashful man contrast his experiences with those of the truly modest man, and he cannot close his eyes to the great truth that the secret cause of his social discomfort is a torturing self-consciousness, and that the cure lies in ceasing to speculate upon what others are thinking of him — in ceasing to think of himself at all.

PREACHING AND PRACTISING.

HE who can take advice is sometimes superior to him who can give it," said a distinguished author. Change the "sometimes" to often and we tread one step nearer to the truth. It costs so little labor to give precepts and monitions; it is so natural to enact the task-master and apportion every man's duty; so pleasant to play the sign-post, and point out the road that others are bound to follow, while we travel upon the primrose-path ourselves!

There was never yet an honest counsellor, however wise or eloquent, who could not have exclaimed with Portia: "I can easier teach twenty what is good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching!" Seneca found it agreeable to set forth the advantages of poverty, while he was writing upon a table of gold; Steele delighted to laud temperance with the fumes of the grape careering through his brain. Sterne vented his tender-heartedness by a touching lamentation over a donkey, and the same hand with which he inscribed his pathetic plaint, fell heavily upon the

trembling frame of his wife. But do we cite these as rare instances of preaching *versus* practising? Would it be difficult to select from the most approved of the social lawgivers, and sapient teachers of the present day, luxurious Senecas, who trumpet all the charms of penury; double-seeing Steeles, who wreathe with laurel the brows of Sobriety; and brutal Sternes, who move the multitude to weep over the wrongs of the brute creation?

> "In sooth we've fallen on an age of talk,
> We halloo to each other of reform,
> And make the shouts suffice."

Assuredly it is not difficult to be a saint in words. Heaven would be abundantly peopled if its crystal gates flew open at the blast of righteous-sounding breaths!

Perhaps we are very presumptuous, yet we dare to cherish the conviction that there exists a more attolent influence than all

> "The full-voiced rhetoric of these master minds;"

one which hourly, but silently, lifts up the hearts of men. We hold to the belief that the most persuasive, impressive, effectual preachers are those whose daily lives are sermons, though we hear no homilies from their lips. In their own persons they exemplify the grandeur of pure aspirations,

the beauty of goodness, the nobleness of self-sacrifice. They show that obedience to the harshest decrees of duty may become a pleasure. They demonstrate the value of time by such cheerful use of every moment, that conscience-stricken Indolence, sitting in their presence, becomes oppressed by her own idleness, and deems it heavier than the weight of labor. They inspire the weak of purpose with reverence for the strength of zeal, by their earnestness. They illustrate the glory of self-conquest, by their victory over those evil passions which are the "foes of a man's own household;" and prove how sweet is the peace which comes after such holy warfare, by their serenity. They pass through the world encompassed by an atmosphere of purity and power so potent and so subtle, that it penetrates into closed hearts, which no less delicate agency could reach, and melts their iciness, and softens their hardness, and breathes the very breath of life into souls that seemed dead. Therefore have we more faith in the puissant ministry of these voiceless preachers than in the most sensation-seeking, revival-rousing exhortation that was ever thundered from the lips of eloquence; for it is not possible to deny that

> "Nearer the stars
> The world is lifted up by noble lives;
> It is the men who in the silence work,
> Nor seek the notice of the vulgar eye

That, like the coral insect, unobserved,
Piling the reef and building with its death,
Isles bright as Paradise, and strong to face
The storms of centuries, lift up the age
Above the idle froth and foam of time."

FORGIVING NOT FORGETTING.

OU have wronged me — I forgive you — but I cannot forget," was Mrs. Flintwell's reply to Miss Abbie Lightly, who came to her a suppliant for pardon.

Abbie was thoughtless, impulsive, unsettled in character. All that was evil within her floated up to the surface, bubbling and babbling, and readily stimulated into action. But there was a golden vein of virtue lying beneath the froth and foam of her effervescent nature. When the passing excitement, which prompted light speech and rash act, subsided; when she sat in the calm seclusion of her own chamber, the good angel, Reflection, softly entered in, and, with sad visage, raised a magic mirror before her eyes, and showed her inconsequent deeds flitting by in long procession, and sorrowfully rehearsed her short-comings and their sequence. And Abbie gazed upon that reproachful presentment, and listened to that gentle, regretful tone, and was moved to contrition! Better still, she rose up courageously and went to the one against whom she had sinned. Though her spirit

was proud it was also generous, and she humbled herself meekly to confess her fault, and penitently to implore forgiveness.

Even so she had gone to Mrs. Flintwell. She owed her a debt of gratitude which should have sealed her lips when bitter and maligning thoughts rose to her unbridled tongue; yet she had spoken ill of her; she had given a malicious interpretation to fair-seeming conduct, and assigned interested motives to actions which bore the appearance of noble self-sacrifice.

Mrs. Flintwell's manners lacked all softness; there was about her a hard solidity, a ramrod uprightness of mind and deportment. She was stern in her honesty, blunt in her truthfulness; her uncompromising integrity often caused her to be rude, for she regarded suavity merely as graceful hypocrisy. She possessed kind feelings, and was actuated by a strong desire to serve her fellow-creatures; but, unhappily, she was not blessed with one particle of tact which could prompt her to use that considerate delicacy which renders services acceptable.

Her favors were conferred in such a decided, pointed way, and so obviously from a sense of right, rather than from tenderness or sympathy, that those whom she desired to benefit, experienced an inclination to reject the proffered aid, and struggle on, rather than receive help so unlovingly tendered.

Mrs. Flintwell always walked in the straight and narrow way, however sharp the stones; no flowery considerations ever lured her into some more tempting by-road. She had no patience with those whose feet were too weak, or whose evil inclinations were too strong to tread the same flinty path.

When Abbie went to her in contrite mood, Mrs. Flintwell listened frigidly to her confession, and replied in an icy tone, "You have wronged me — I forgive you, but I cannot forget!"

Their social position caused the two ladies constantly to meet. Abbie was always treated by Mrs. Flintwell with marked coldness and distrust. Her air seemed to say, "I know you; I am keeping watch over your doings; I am guarding against you." Her whole manner showed that the recollection of the wrong she had received was ever fresh in her memory; that, in her own language (language so often used by those who say — ay, and think they pardon,) she had forgiven, but not forgotten.

Not forgotten? Then the wrong is registered, not wiped out! If thus chronicled, if unblotted out, then, assuredly, it is not forgiven, however she who pardons with her lips only, may try to cheat herself into the belief that she has actually pardoned. Put no faith in such forgiveness. There is no pardon that forgives, yet forgets not.

To pardon truly, internally, the very memory of the wrong should be gradually obliterated, and if

the stirring of some chance chord calls up an involuntary remembrance, it will quickly be silenced and cast out of the thoughts. Let us not flatter ourselves into the convenient belief that we generously, and with Christian leniency, forgive the injuries we receive (and who is so insignificant that he receives none ?) if we keep a strict account of their sum and magnitude. Not one single one of them is fully pardoned until it has been plunged beneath the waters of Lethe !

FAULT-SEEKERS.

IT is easier to cavil than to applaud — easier to carp than to appreciate. The voice of praise is low and feeble, for it issues from the generous and discriminating few; its tone is readily drowned by the loud cries of condemnation roared from the lips of the captious million. No talent, no taste, no information are requisite to qualify the self-constituted censor for his office.

> "A man must serve his time to every trade
> Save censure — critics all are ready made,"

says the poet. These surgeons of literature pass through no college, and earn no diplomas, to establish their right to cut and slash, dismember and decapitate the fair offsprings of mightier minds. Walter Scott aptly designates them as "tinkers who, unable to make pots and pans themselves, set up for menders of them."

In art, as in literature, their eyes search out defects alone, and are as blind to beauties as bats

to sunshine. In the wonders of Science they behold not the marvels she has achieved but the desirable ends she has failed to compass.

Their indulgence of this fault-finding passion gradually renders them skeptical of the existence of all genius and greatness, all truth and triumph. They believe in nothing but the earth's imperfections and man's short-comings.

But it is in the every-day contact with humanity that this condemning, hypercritical spirit proves most tormenting and most disastrous. The constitutional fault-seeker never makes a new acquaintance without tearing the unlucky individual's character to pieces, to search out all its crooked turns, sharp angles, and weak points. If the nature he is dissecting chance to be one enriched with many virtues, — virtues which the ready censor never himself possessed, — he tries to drag it down to his own level, by pronouncing its graces assumed and its goodness spurious. If, on the other hand, it be a temperament full of faults, he glories over their discovery, and points them out with compassionless zeal. He never admits, as excuse, the plea of inherited evil, the lack of early discipline, the contagion of forced association ; and he never dreams that *he* is prone to the same failings himself, but lifts up his eyes and hands and thanks Heaven that he is " not such a man." Not a foible escapes his keen scrutiny ; he drags the merest weaknesses into broad light ; magnifies

them into vices, unsparingly judges and condemns the culprit, and wholly forgets that he is making a merciless law by which he will be judged in turn.

Is it thus that the angels with their pure eyes, look down upon mortals? Those eyes pierce the coarse veil of flesh, and gaze into the depths of the spirit; therefore all our imperfections they must surely see; but upon these their holy contemplation never dwells. They seek out the hidden gems of the mind, and toilingly remove the surrounding ore of evil, and gently polish the least valuable jewel, with the attrition of circumstance, until all its sparkle is developed. They search out and foster every little, weak, struggling germ of goodness, give it the sunshine of their celestial smiles, and when it droops, as though about to die, pour upon it the refreshing rain of their pitying tears. They look upon a man's virtues as the Heaven-ordered flowers in the garden of his heart, on his faults, as the weeds, sown by an enemy, that must be rooted out with tenderest hands, for fear that some delicate violet of promise may be plucked up with the nightshade beside which it grew.

Should it not be the perpetual aspiration of that man who hopes to associate with angels hereafter, to make this, his preparatory life, approach as nearly as possible to the lives of the wished-for companions of his future? If he would cultivate the angelic within himself (which alone can bring

him in communion with angelic existences), he must cast out the spirit of fault-seeking, and substitute in its place that loving gaze which beholds the least precious gem of worth, though buried deep beneath beneath the mire of impurity — that holy vision which discovers the feeblest shoot of virtue, though overshadowed by the flaunting weeds of folly.

BOOKS.

"MY library was dukedom large enough," said the majestic Prospero; and to a true lover of books a choice library is a kingdom of countless opulence and measureless extent. At the feet of its sovereign a Golconda opens, and from its teeming mines he may gather gems of knowledge to circle his own brow with a diadem more lustrous than the crowns of princes.

No wizard's wand in olden days ever wrought such marvels as the mighty conjuring of quaint John Guttenberg's unsightly types! As we gaze upon the transcript of master minds, spread before us by their dark impress, what spectral forms start from the magic pages! The solitary room is peopled with shapes that came not in at the doors. The great man, whose bones lie mouldering in yonder churchyard, stands beside us, a dear, familiar friend. The buried beauty floods the chamber with the golden radiance of her smile. Electric flashes of wit play around us from mouths that have long been fleshless. The silence is made musical with tones of pathos, of mirth, of counsel,

of approval, all issuing from those living leaves. The poet says, "aspire!" the sage, "be wise!" the martyr, "be heroic!" the divine, "be humble!" Bare walls are suddenly hung with glowing pictures of human life. Time and space are annihilated. A gentle companion softly takes our hand in his, and leads us over mountains and across seas, up dizzy heights, down cavernous abysses, through labyrinthine gardens, into loathsome dungeons; nay, he even soars with us to the pearly gates, beyond the blue expanse, and reveals a momentary glimpse of the celestial realms they inclose.

It may be that we opened the volume whence all this enchantment comes forth, weary and disheartened, and seeing only the dark and tangled threads in the web of life; but we close it, after that strange wandering, that mysterious communing, refreshed and strengthened. Some of the ends of the knotted skein have been found, and the shapes they were designed to broider upon Fate's tapestry are discovered. We have assumed a new armor of courage, while consorting with courageous spirits. We grow valiant for life's battle, because we have witnessed victories and talked with conquerors.

Benjamin Franklin, when he was a boy, met with a book entitled "Essays to do Good;" of which he says, "it gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through

life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good than any other kind of reputation; and, if I have been a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book." There can be no doubt that the lives of thousands are influenced by the books they peruse at a period when the mind is like an unwritten page, and of wax-like impressibility. A breath from some chance volume may fill the sails of the human ship, just launched on the broad ocean of existence, and give the first impetus towards a harbor of safety or the engulfing maelstrom.

O, how often have the pure lips of maidenhood quaffed from the Circe-cup of an evil book until the entrancing poison coursed through young veins beyond the power of antidote, and the health of the spirit was hopelessly broken! Give us, then, fearless and honest critics, who will distinguish the fair-seeming nightshade from the innocent flowers of fiction. Let the Censor's broad fan diligently winnow away the light and profitless chaff of literature, and disclose the wholesome wheaten treasure beneath, which yields fit nourishment for the expanding intellect. He who performs this sacred duty, achieves a double good, for he surely increases our reverence for books; and can we revere them too much, when our very religion comes to us embalmed in the holy pages of an inspired volume?

LONG ENGAGEMENTS.

HEN the heart surrenders, confirm the blushing promise quickly at the altar's foot!" is the adjuration of every enamored suitor, eager for the climax of the wedding-ring.

But the maiden who reflects will respond with no hasty "amen" to that fond prayer. Reflects? does not King Oberon still walk the earth, performing as fantastic and amazing feats with his magical flower as in the days of Bully Bottom? And did woman ever reflect after the fairy monarch had stolen upon her slumbers and pressed the juice of his purple blossom upon her folded lids? The portals of her heart open with her eyes, when the latter have once received that mystic flower's touch, and the eyes take in and the heart enthrones the being first looked upon. Let him wear what shape he may, he is transformed and glorified to her vision by Love's glamor. That moment Reason is unceremoniously thrust out of doors. In vain she clamors to be heard, and warns the infatuated fair one against precipitancy;

in vain she reminds her that her happiness is more easily perilled than man's; that her susceptibilities are keener, that her sufferings will be greater, that her risks are a thousand-fold more numerous. Love fashions a fool's-cap out of his madrigals to bind it upon Reason's brow, and from that hour she passes for Folly.

Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World" quaintly remarks that "marriage has been compared to a game of skill for life; it is generous, then, in both parties to declare that they are sharpers in the beginning. In England, I am told, both sides use every art to conceal their defects from each other before marriage, and the rest of their lives may be regarded as doing penance for their former dissimulation."

Is this a malicious slander or a rudely-expressed truth? Are not lovers, all the world over, zealously engaged in cheating each other? Does not the very state of mental exaltation, produced by an absorbing affection give birth to unpremeditated deception? Nay, has not love, in the dawn of its existence, a beautifying influence upon the whole constitution of man's soul? Are not commonplace minds elevated and rendered poetic by its refining power? What, then, must be its effect upon spirits of finer mould!

The period of an open, prosperous betrothal is the blossoming season of life. The sun of a pure passion calls forth the fairest flowers upon every

tree, and the air is filled with the melody of birds carolling joyful promises from the branches. In the sunshine of bright illusions, the exhilarating atmosphere of alternate hopes and fears, the heart glows and swells and takes in all creation with unwonted tenderness; the dullest prospects are tinged with orient hues; the simplest incidents communicate a thrill of joy; Nature puts on her gala dress to welcome the enamored pair wherever they wander, and shakes down odorous tributes upon their heads from every bough.

And it is well. It is better for the soul, even when love is misplaced, to give a boundless devotion, than to entertain a tame affection for an object worthy of the whole wealth of the heart.

The man of her choice is always a hero to a woman who loves heartily; and her fond fancy invests him with an abundance of captivating attributes, which possibly have not the most shadowy existence out of her imagination. On the other hand Shakspeare tells us that to men "women are angels wooing." But O! the bitter disenchantment if, in the glare of Hymen's torch, the ideal charms vanish away, the mantle of glory falls from the hero's shoulders, and the "angel" at whose shrine the lover devoutly worshipped, stands before him a most terrestrial being, full of failings, wants, caprices, inconsistencies!

Unconsciously his eyes must then forget

"The gentle ray
They wore in courtship's smiling day" —

his voice must lose

"The tones that shed
A tenderness round all they said" —

the roses of her bridal chaplet must wither and leave a martyr's crown of thorns upon the brow they encircled.

The probation of a long engagement is the surest talisman against this rude dissolving of the spell that surrounds lovers. During the interval their various phases of character are revealed by unforeseen chances — by life's inevitable mutations; and, being discovered at this blissful period when no life-shackle makes endurance compulsory, even grave faults and temper-trying peculiarities are readily tolerated and excused. Mental angularities are worn away and rounded off to a graceful smoothness, by the attrition of constant association. Their souls become attuned to the same key. The indispensable lesson of mutual forbearance is conned betimes. Love has leisure allowed him to build his temple upon the rock of perfect trust which no storm can shake. The flashing flame of enthusiam, by which its shrine was illumined at consecration, is gradually replaced by that steady, holy light, which fiercest gales cannot extinguish. Good spirits have whispered to the

wife-elect that she will need Martha's executive hands, and Mary's appreciating soul, to keep those altars swept and garnished, and have murmured in her partner's ear that he must reign within those walls with Solomon's wisdom and Jacob's patience. Thus the prolonged betrothal is often the tuneful prelude to a harmonious union, with no harsh discords to disturb its life-long melody.

PERILS OF PROSPERITY.

PERILS of prosperity! "Oh, all very fine! but I should like to experience those perils a little," cries an incredulous young friend, quoting from that precocious juvenile who made the same answer to his mother, when she told him that he must abstain from certain amusements which she accounted full of sin and peril.

We all want to experience alluring perils for ourselves, especially those of prosperity. Seemingly, they must be very pleasant to encounter. Who denies that they are? But even the sense of long-protracted pleasure palls and wearies. Uninterrupted prosperity tries the spirit more severely than continuous adversity. You shake your curly head, youthful doubter. You cannot believe that those fair-seeming apples which you hunger to taste, may, like those gathered on the Dead Sea shore, leave only ashes upon your eager lips. Yet we give you high authority for our assertion. Listen to what Jeremy Taylor said: "No man is more miserable than he that hath no adversity;

that man is not tried whether he be good or bad; and God never crowns those virtues which are only faculties and dispositions."

It is indisputable that those individuals who have been permitted a long period of unshadowed prosperity, seldom prize their own rich store — are seldom conscious of its opulence — are often as poor in real enjoyment, (we might say poorer) than those who have known great reverses. Shakspeare tells us "they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing;" and, in truth, they lose the appetite, and the power of tasting, which gives to the hungry man's simplest food its keen relish.

Let the sun always shine and the tired eye will soon be dazzled by its ceaseless glare, and be blinded to objects rendered beautiful by its radiance. "The rays of happiness, like the light, are colorless when unbroken," writes Longfellow. Untempered sunshine withers the fruits of the intellect, as of the orchard. Clouds, and cooling shadows, and refreshing rain, are as needful for mental as for natural growth. Without them the soil is parched and hardened, and its fairest products wither. Ambition is dwarfed by prosperity, which leaves nothing to seek, nothing to desire. The energies droop like wilted leaves. The soul grows lethargic and feeble, and is in peril of being stricken with what has forcibly been styled a "moral *coup de soleil.*" That cornucopia which

Hercules tore from the brow of Achelous, when he attacked him in the shape of an ox, and which the Goddess of Plenty carries, filled with fruits and flowers, grows a very tiresome symbol to the satiated minions of fortune. They would gladly restore the horn to the ox's brow, if it would only toss up some enlivening and exciting incident, to break through the dreary monotony of their existence.

We are half inclined to believe that none of us enjoy any happiness fully, intensely, until we have been deprived of it for a season; or, at least, until we have learned its value by threatened loss.

There is a saying, (a French one, if we do not mistake,) that, "it is very easy to be amiable when one is happy." A state of unwonted happiness may temporarily expand the heart, and give birth to that merely external, smiling, social complaisance which passes for amiability; but habitual prosperity is not calculated to foster the sympathetic tenderness which deserves the name of amiability. Prosperity is apt to render us selfish, and unaware of, and uncareful for, the ills and privations of others. This is partly because we do not comprehend; we are not impressed by the contemplation of evils we have not ourselves endured. We see them only as in a picture — a very sad picture, perhaps, but one that quickly fades out of our memory, because no painful reality has been imparted to it through our own remembered experiences.

Observe how seldom those who have enjoyed unvarying prosperity are considerate or compassionate. Note a wayside beggar, seated on the cold stones, starvation written upon his pallid face, his skeleton-like hand mutely extended for alms. Mark, how the pampered child of Fortune will rustle her rich silks, and sweep her soft velvets carelessly by him, with an abstracted look, or possibly with a slight shudder. But see how the weary, wan, poorly-clad seamstress stops and gives from her narrow store a mite, which will deprive her of some comfort she can ill forego. She knows the meaning of that look of misery, and spontaneously answers the voiceless appeal. Her humble gift may be injudicious, probably it is so, since it is given without due inquiry, but it was not on this ground that her opulent sister withheld a donation which would not have curtailed her least valued luxury. It was because she had not felt the gnawing fangs of want; because sorrow had not breathed upon and melted the ice in her soul; because prosperity had fossilized her heart. Well might the monitor-dramatist cry out:

> "Take physic, Pomp!
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayest shake the superflux to them,
> And show the heavens more just."

Could we still hope for, still seek for, still pray for this unclouded prosperity, if we believed that

it threatened mental paralysis, which must deprive us of all consciousness of our abundant blessings? if we were certain that it would render us callous to the sufferings of others, if our eyes were once fully opened to half its spiritual perils? Has not adversity better and sweeter uses? Have not the dormant energies of many a mind, which grew weak and sluggish in the Dead Sea calm of prosperity, been electrified into action by the awakening shock of misfortune, the stimulus of sorrow? Has not many a helpless child of luxury risen up transformed by the imperative necessity for exertion, until she marvelled at the unimagined greatness of her own powers? Shall we then deem that perilous amount of prosperity which would stunt our intellects or harden our hearts, a desirable boon? Shall we not rather welcome even adversity, if it open our spirits to all softening and holy influences; if it develop our faculties to their fullest, broadest, highest capacity!

MANNER MUTATIONS.

MR. and Mrs. Lipscome, to all appearance, are a very pleasant, polite, socially ornamental couple ; everything pertaining to them is as unexceptionable as their attire, that is, when you meet them in " company costume ; " but O ! the difference, if you chance to behold them in undress ! See Mrs. Lipscome in the morning, in her breakfast wrapper, (not a particularly neat or tasteful one,) before those rebellious brown locks are bandolined into stiff smoothness, or cast into the bondage of braids, and ere her somewhat ample proportions have been compressed into wasp-like outlines, and draped in faithful illustration of the last Parisian fashion plate, — and her mind is as much *en déshabille* as her person. She moves about in a careless, ungainly way ; her actions are almost vulgar ; her voice is loud or sharp ; her language verges upon coarseness ; she is brusque, nay, positively uncivil ; in fact, she might easily be mistaken for one of her own " hired helps."

But observe her, a few hours later, receiving

visitors in her own drawing-room, or a guest herself at the residence of a friend; what a metamorphosis! Her manners have undergone the same mutation as her raiment! Whose bearing can be more decorous than hers? Look at the graceful attitude in which she sits! See with what conscious dignity she walks! Listen to her voice, softened to the low tone of good-breeding! Mark how choice are her expressions! How highly proper are the sentiments to which she gives utterance! With the adornment of her person, her character is becomingly apparelled, and both are charmingly revealed together. Strange to say, this illusive sheen and enamel are such admirable counterfeits that they pass for genuine brilliancy and polish. She almost makes you doubt that you ever heard her use the unrefined phrases that shocked your ears, perhaps that very morning; or that you really beheld her bustling about, scolding the children, flying at the servants, snubbing her husband, and going into "tantrums" over the fracture of china. The destruction of all the porcelain treasures of *Sévres* could not ruffle those fine feathers which she now wears so complacently, or make her forget the *rôle* for which she is so elaborately costumed.

Mr. Lipscome's deportment is subject to the same singular variability, dependent upon his toilette. In his shabby business suit, or in his faded dressing-gown and well-worn slippers, he is un-

couth as Caliban, oblivious of all forms, familiar to rudeness with his friends, and almost savage to his wife. The usual locality of his feet we forbear to mention, and his favorite postures are not sufficiently classic to be described in history. He selfishly consults no one's comfort but his own, and when the latter is interfered with, his indignation finds vent in utterances too profane to be registered. But when Mr. Lipscome is "gotten up" for a *soirée*, lo! the transformation! His patent-leather boots are not more highly polished than his demeanor. The elegance of his attire is almost eclipsed by the refinement of his deportment. He is not merely respectful to the gentler sex, but actually reverential; zealous in promoting their pleasure, and lavish of all those *petits soins* by which man expresses to woman his tender guardianship as a superior, and his flattering devotion as an inferior. Mr. Lipscome's grum silence gives place to a voluble *persiflage* which passes for agreeable conversation; and, as for any of the irreverent ejaculations with which he interspersed his discourse, when he wore a rusty outside, there's magic in that black suit, and those white kid gloves, to suppress such emphasis altogether. But let him put away his dress-coat, and be sure he will carefully lay his good breeding in lavender, by its side.

It is not difficult to solve the mystery of this marvellous mutation of manner with change of ap-

parel. When an actor is attiring himself for the stage, we well know, that at the moment he endues himself with the costume suited to his part, the spirit of personation comes upon him; he readily imagines himself to be the individual he is "making himself up" to represent. The Lipscomes are only players on the world's great stage, — bedizened puppets of the hour, — admirable shams, robed to enact the parts of lady and gentleman. You meet them every day under many names, and never suspect the imposture. See them *en déshabille* and you may always discover the cheat. Were the characters they assume their own, refinement, good breeding, grace, would be apparent in any attire, however simple, or humble, or even disordered.

KINDNESS.

TO do a kindness kindly, to confer a favor with such tact and delicacy that the recipient will not be oppressed by a sense of obligation, is an art. Wherefore is it one so little cultivated by the kind spirits of this world?

There are persons who are quick to execute praiseworthy actions, who take pleasure in works of beneficence, yet who always perform them in a hard, cold way, as though impelled by the promptings of compulsive duty alone.

Individuals of another class bestow their good gifts more graciously, but evidently expect a due acknowledgment; they have the air of requiring "so much for so much," and their undisguised demand for a full measure of thanks often annihilates the very existence of gratitude. You see, at a glance, that they are laying their kind deeds out at usury, and hope for a large income of reward; perhaps in the shape of a wide reputation for goodness; perhaps from the return of some greater benefit than the one conferred; perhaps

through the gratification of assuming an air of superiority in the character of benefactor.

The kindness of another order of temperaments is impulsive, whimsical and spasmodical; the effervescing exuberance of a pleasant state of mind; a transient excitement which quickly exhausts itself. Wearied of well-doing, these uncertain friends soon exclaim, "I've done enough!" Enough! as if a poor, feeble mortal, though he use his best energies for the promotion of his neighbor's welfare, can ever arrive at a period when, through the greatness of his deeds, he may fold his hands and say, "I've done enough!"

There is an old proverb which warns us that the last person from whom we should expect to receive a favor is the one upon whom we have liberally bestowed favors. And it is not unusual for persons to experience a positive aversion towards those who have done them great services; an aversion they struggle against, they are ashamed of, they despise themselves for entertaining, and yet are ever keenly conscious of feeling. Is not this very often the consequence of the manner in which the services have been rendered?

Nothing so thoroughly destroys the beauty of an act of kindness as the desire for, or even the expectation of, gratitude. And yet nothing is more common.

The poet Rogers tells us that "to bless is to be blest;" and true kindness instinctively communi-

cates to those whom we are permitted to benefit, a consciousness of the happiness we ourselves derive from the power of benefaction placed in our unworthy hands, makes them sensible of the blessedness which springs from that power's exercise, reveals to them the indebtedness we cherish towards those who are the recipients of its use.

Kant, in the spirit of veritable charity, declares that the way to love the neighbor is to do good to him first, and we shall love him after as the consequence of having done good to him. When kindness is genuine in the soul, when it strikes deep roots and is nourished by a holy source, there is always an increased sense of affection experienced towards those who have needed and received kindnesses at our hands.

Effectual, widely-extended kindness, does not alone consist in the performance of tangible and undeniable services to others. Kind looks, and words, and gentle, kindly ways may be of incalculable benefit. Natures grow hard and rough through the absence of a surrounding atmosphere of permanent kindness, and are softened and humanized by the influence of habitual, persistent gentleness and consideration. When the angel of kindness enters a heart where it can take up its abode, it looks through the eyes of the man, and speaks with his voice, and moves with his motions, and guides his hands and his feet, and stretches out his arms to clasp the whole world in charity's

warm embrace ; and this, every day of his life and every hour of his day. Good works become the delight of his existence, and the very idea of remuneration, of reward in any imaginable shape (save that of internal satisfaction) would diminish the happiness he enjoys.

"Ye are not your own!" said St. Paul. If God demanded from us at any moment all that he has given, what should we have left? What physical, mental, spiritual attributes would remain? Would not our very existence cease? Can the truth of the apostle's assertion need a stronger demonstration than is found in the answer to these queries? If we are not "our own," the power to serve, the capacity to comfort, the faculty to "be kind," are not "our own," but are among the precious gifts entrusted to us by the great Giver, as the ten talents were placed in the keeping of the faithful servant. What right have we then to claim the return even of gratitude, since we are using that which is not "our own," but our Master's? since we are only the media chosen for dispensing that Master's beneficence? since we must render up an account of the equitable and liberal distribution of all that has been placed in our hands? With the conviction that we are not "our own," ever present, who could ask a return for the kindnesses he is Heaven-commissioned to bestow, and which are not "his own," albeit they are distributed through his agency? If a thought

of gratitude, a hope of compensation, once spring up in the mind, the kindness with which they are associated is spurious, and its true name is interest, gain, whim, or self-love. How many of the acts, upon which we complacently bestow the appellation of "kind," will not suddenly change their shape and title beneath the touch of that Ithuriel-like test?

LOOKING BACK.

WHO does not cling to the past; to the days when we were what we are no longer? Who, that has taken weary steps on the great high road of mortality, does not love to plunge beneath the lava and ashes of life's volcanic throes, and disinter the buried images of childhood, of days when existence was full of flattering auspices,

"When the heart promised what the fancy drew,"

and the most delusive dreams wore the shape of reality?

The visions of the past rise before us, softened and mellowed by the hues — the idealizing touch, of memory. Bygone hours catch a fictitious radiance in their flight. Their flowers were brighter, their grass greener, their waters more sparkling, their gala days more exhilarating than those of any possible present, or hoped-for future. If there were dark shadows, or harsh coloring, in those pictures, they dissolve out of the violet mists of remembrance. Time, who flings the veil of oblivion

over "the weariness that's gone," floods the mind with the reflected light of vanished joys.

Few are the beings to whom "looking back" can bring no comfort. When life is dismantled of the garlands of youth, the gems of beauty, the drapery of imagination, memory restores what years have stolen. The spirit, bruised by the blows of sorrow, and bowed with weight of cares, looks back upon the days when opening life showed, through the rosy lens of hope, the long vista of a pathway amid pleasant groves and bowery shades, and musingly gathers the fallen blossoms of the past, to cover some dark, soul-prostrating pit-fall of the present.

The frame may cease to know the pulse of rejoicing, and yet recollections of departed gladness will bring back a smile to the faded countenance, a happy thrill to the heavy heart. Most truly says the poet, —

> "And often, glad no more,
> We wear a face of joy because
> We have been glad of yore."

We have heard the love of "looking back" condemned. The lips of the worldly-wise have said, "close the page and seal the book, and look not back upon what has been, but ever forward to what shall be." But is not the future corrected by the past? What are the painful lessons of

experience worth, if we do not contemplate their teachings?

Nothing that keeps the mind impressible, that opens it to mild and touching influences, is harmful, and retrospection has a softening power over the most flint-like natures.

Hearts that seemed almost dead to hope or feeling have leapt and palpitated at the sound of some old strain, some ballad's familiar words. Eyes that were dimmed by oft-shed tears have kindled at the sight of some withered flower, some faded relic that conjured up the shapes, the voices, the aspirations of other days.

Many a wife who has seen the choice of her youth lapsing from virtue until her heart insensibly turned against him, and the hand which should have been stretched out to lure him back into the paths of honor, was paralyzed, has felt her dead affections vivified and awakened by the remembrance of the happy hours of her betrothal, her bridal days, evoked by some olden token, some letter full of loving words which chanced to be turned over in the search after other things. Her tenderness has been rekindled and her strength renewed by these trifles, which forced her to "look back," more potently, than by all the reasoning and chiding to which stern Duty and rebuking Conscience subjected her.

How many instances are there of minds which have wandered into the fantastic realms of mad-

ness, summoned home in an instant, by the touching of some electric chord of the past, which caused the spirit to "look back," and thus attuned the jarring strings and brought sweet order out of the wild confusion of the brain!

One of the most beautiful and melting illustrations of the beneficent wonders wrought by "looking back," is given by Moore, in his exquisite allegory of "Paradise and the Peri," when he portrays a man, whose soul is heavy with manifold crimes, watching the gambols of an innocent child. At the sound of the vesper bell the boy starts up from his couch of flowers and sinks upon his knees, his hands fervently clasped and his pure brow and eyes lifted heavenward. A long-silent string vibrates in the heart of the wretched man; he recalls the days when he knelt with a prayer on his lips, — lips that were as sinless as those of that little child; his whole life of guilt rises in terrible review before him, the first tears of penitence quench the evil fire of his eyes and wash his guilt-stained cheeks — he kneels! he prays!

Who can doubt that the soul has eternal memory? Every man carries about him invisible tablets which are his "book of life." The work of every day is indelibly graven upon a new page. The records may seem to be obliterated in this world, but every line must be read in that sphere where there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nothing hid that shall not be known. But even on

this earth the leaves long closed, the book long sealed, may be suddenly opened by some marvellous and inexplicable agency, by the sudden shock of a life-peril, by strong mental excitement, by the spiritualizing effect of long illness, or by the sound of the approaching footsteps of the great Summoner. To those who foster the habit of "looking back," the chronicles of that wondrous book furnish a key to the enigma of all the tangled threads in life's web, and the finger of Divine Providence is every hour revealed in their mysterious unwinding

WIFELY HELP.

WHEN Columbus braved the perils of unknown seas to add America to the world, it was the white hand of a woman that fitted him for his venturesome voyage of discovery. So woman equips man every day for the voyage of life. Woman as man's helper rises to her "peculiar and best altitude." He represents the intellect, she the mind-governing heart. Power appertains to him, but influence, more subtle and penetrating than power — another name for power in its most delicate and all-pervading form — belongs to her.

Sheridan said "it is by woman that nature writes upon the heart of man," and what hand can trace such glorious inscriptions upon that book, when it is sacredly hers, as a wife's? Was there ever man, however great his moral strength, however exalted his intellectual height, whose powers could not be increased by a wife's aid, or enfeebled by the down-dragging weight of her unsympathetic opposition? The man to whom she is united (when that union is not a mere, formal

mockery,) draws inspiration from the magnetic breath of her appreciative praises. If he is fortunate, her enthusiasm gives sweetness to his successes; — if he is struggling, her heroism in battling with difficulties, infuses courage into his soul; — if his steps are dogged by the evil spirit of failure, her cheerful patience softens the disheartening persecutions of the demon. When he returns troubled and fretful to his home, her tact ignores his ill humor until he forgets it himself; — when he is unreasonable she smiles, unseen, at his grave contradictions, and allows him to chide her for supposed caprice. She bears with his failings as no one else can or will bear with them; — she well knows that endurance is her own especial gift, and not his, and deems his peevishness and impatience, when he is suffering, a matter of course, though double the amount of pain would not extract from her a murmur or a groan. She comprehends how much the peace and happiness of life — married life in particular — depend upon trifles as light as air, and strives to guard him against petty domestic vexations, less endurable to some temperaments than actual afflictions. She never forgets that the absence from its proper place of the tiny but all important button, the mislaying of the indispensable closet keys, the necessity of waiting for an unpunctual meal, may imperil a man's affection, or unfit him for his most important avocations, particularly if they are of an intellectual or artistic character.

Let the wife only understand and have faith in her true position, that of woman "the helper," and she needs neither great gifts, nor an expansive mind, nor extraordinary beauty to be always charming to her husband, and, while she walks by his side, to

"Fill all the stops of life with music."

In being literally his "help-meet" she becomes the beautifier and healer of his life. If the parasitic vine about the oak-tree, to which she is so often compared, be truly her emblem, it is because she binds together the broken boughs, and drapes with verdurous loveliness the withered branches.

THE TRUSTFUL.

THE trusting, as a general rule, are the trustworthy. Those who "think no evil" are usually those who least deserve that evil should be thought of them. Ignorant of heart-treason, never looking for wrong from others because never doing wrong to others, never doubting because never deceiving, trustfulness is inherent in their natures.

Suspicion that vaguely roams abroad is the offspring of Deception, hidden in the generating warmth of our own hearts at home. An unconscious judging of others by ourselves, a measuring by our own height, and coloring by our own complexion, actuate the whole universe. There are no foibles which we so quickly detect in the concealed depths of other spirits as those with which our eyes are most familiar when their mental vision is turned inward.

Lavater warns us to "shun the man who never laughs, who dislikes music and the glad face of a child." The counsel implies that mirth, and harmony, and innocence are strangers to such a being.

Upon the same principle should we avoid the man who mistrusts the motives of his fellow men, who always suspects that selfishness is the secret spring of every fair-seeming action, who mistakes courtesy for policy, who disbelieves in the genuineness of Virtue until she has passed through some fiery ordeal with unscathed garments, and thus proved her supernal origin.

"Treat your friends as though they might one day become your enemies," is the advice of these graduates of wisdom's worldly school; but he who darkens the genial sunshine of friendship by the shadow of this anticipated enmity, is incapable of becoming a disinterested friend. His admission of the possibility of change in another reveals the instability of his own sentiments.

When we speak of trusting natures we do not mean temperaments that are simply credulous, that, without reflection or discrimination, impulsively accept all offered hands, and believe all uttered professions, from a sort of quick-swallowing credulity, as capacious as Garagantua's mouth. By the trustful we designate those who are not given to causeless misgivings, who confide, where they love, with an unquestioning, uncalculating simplicity, a gentle reliance, which sometimes evokes sincerity even out of falsehood. Their trustfulness is often an unconscious shield, which turns aside the weapons of the wiley, and makes Deception blush and lay down her arms, as a giant

ashamed to waste strength or stratagem upon defenceless infancy.

True, these trusting natures suffer much in life's combat. Disappointment deals them crushing blows; they find many of their idols made of clay; many a seeming oak, against which they lean, proves a broken reed; many a flower, cherished in their bosoms, exhales poison. They shrink, appalled, from the harsh lessons of Experience, who teaches them how few in the world resemble themselves; yet their very trustfulness is its own compensation.

It is the province of poets to condense truths in music that haunts the mind with its ringing changes. Among these haunting truths, wedded to melodious verse, are Fanny Kemble's lines:

"Better trust all, and be deceived,
And weep that trust and that deceiving,
Than doubt one heart that if believed
Had blest one's life with true believing.

Oh, in this mocking world, too fast
The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth,
Better be cheated to the last,
Than lose the blessed hope of truth."

REST.

HOW does the world, in general, define rest? Is it not as a state of perfect quietude and absence from all occupation? as a folding of the hands and reposing of the limbs? as a waking slumber? Certes, this rest, when it succeeds great and prostrating physical or intellectual labor, is refreshing and delicious; but is it the only, is it the most restoring, the most invigorating rest? We think not.

Change of employment, that turns the current of thought and action into new channels, often ensures more effectual *delassement*. Rest to earnest spirits, to well-developed minds, comes not in the shape of indolence; to them idleness would only generate a new form of weariness. Pleasurable activity, the summoning of unworn faculties into play, impart to energetic temperaments the rest they could never find in a dormant suspense of their powers. When their attention is engrossed by eager pursuit of some desirable object, they experience no sense of toil; when they are engaged in congenial occupation, especially when it has

been preceded by that which was distasteful, they are resting; and though they work, their exertion fatigues them no more than it wearies a flower to expand its leaves, drink in the dew, absorb the sunshine; or a swan to float upon the crystal stream; or a fish to glide beneath the shining waters; or a bird to skim through the perfumed air; or a lamb to sport in flowery meads.

That disease of sluggish and imperfect organizations, that pleasant do nothing (save when it is the sequence of doing much, and thus needful to repair physical waste and exhaustion,) is the severest and most difficult of all labor; is positive torment to spirits whose healthful impulse bids them be

> "Up and doing,
> Life's heroic ends pursuing."

This unnatural stagnation withers their intellects as a mental simoom; it produces a conscious paralysis, and makes the struggling mind fight in impotent agony to use its sense-blunted instrument, the body. A giant chained, warring with fetters that gnaw into his flesh, is as much at rest as these rich, exuberant natures under compulsory quiescence. Their very gift of strength, their very capability for action, when unused, become burdens and entail misery.

When it is said of the "blessed" who enter that spirit world,

> "Outside the limits of our space and time,
> Whereto we are bound,"

that they shall "rest from their labors," it could never be meant that they should endure perpetual repose, and endless lethargic inactivity. They shall rest from their warfare against the evil inclinations over which they have gained a victory, as the conqueror rests with laurelled brows after he has triumphed over his foes. They labor and are weary no more, but the rest they enjoy is congenial employment, a happy ministry, an untiring use of faculties quickened, heightened, perfected in that atmosphere where no work will be in vain; where our hearts will not ache, as now, over brave attempts defeated by circumstance; where no good purpose will be allied to infirm execution; where deeds will keep pace with aims; where noble labor will be followed by glorious fruition! The poet's soul spoke with the voice of inspiration when it said:

> "I count that heaven itself is only work
> To a surer issue,"

but work which knows no distaste, no coercion, no waste of power, no exhaustion! Work which carries in its bosom the truest, most delightful rest!

GOLDEN LINKS OF KINDRED.

BLESSED is the home that holds in its midst one central magnet, about which thronging hearts, reddened by the same blood, move with never-failing attraction! When golden links of kindred, circling that human loadstone, are strong, and bright, and many, who can measure the wealth of love that lies within their holy compass? With every shining fetter added to the precious round, new joys spring into existence; new interests bind us to sacred memories of the past, or sweet associations of the present; new affections bend us earthward, towards those who come to make earth dearer, or lift us heavenward, with those who ascend to the skies.

The commonest events of life, events of every day occurrence to all humanity, send an electric thrill of pain or pleasure through that far-reaching chain of kinship, and, stirring sympathetic pulses, draw the bond of union closer.

A little child opens its sinless eyes upon the day, behold, another link put forth for tender lips to kiss into brightness, for loving arms to wel-

come, for swelling hearts to give room, for voiceless benedictions to cover!

A youth, or maiden, stretches out a hand, with heart within, and lo! another link is clasped by a wedding ring, upon the kin-bound chain, and nuptial gifts, and festive gatherings, and fond congratulations greet its admission!

The angel of Death descends, and singles out the purest link, and softly bears it to a home invisible. Tears of agony must flow, and grief-wrung hearts must ache; but tears that fall from many eyes, weeping together, lose their bitterness; and heavy hearts that lean on one another find their load of sorrow lightened.

Other, less mournful, partings come; some of the close-knit band must make their homes on foreign shores; but ocean cables are less strong and true than bonds of union that no seas can sever; and rapture grows out of the very pangs of absence, when wanderers return, with tiny links hanging, like diamond pendants, from their own.

Birth, marriage, death, parting, meeting; these are but trite and every-day events, yet through the golden links of kindred they send a current of emotion that stirs many hearts, and makes epochs in many lives! O, keep the links pure and bright, however wide the chain, and burdens of sorrow will be lessened, because shared, and sources of joy will swell in number because they reach as far as blood extends!

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